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Issue Eighty Four | April 2015

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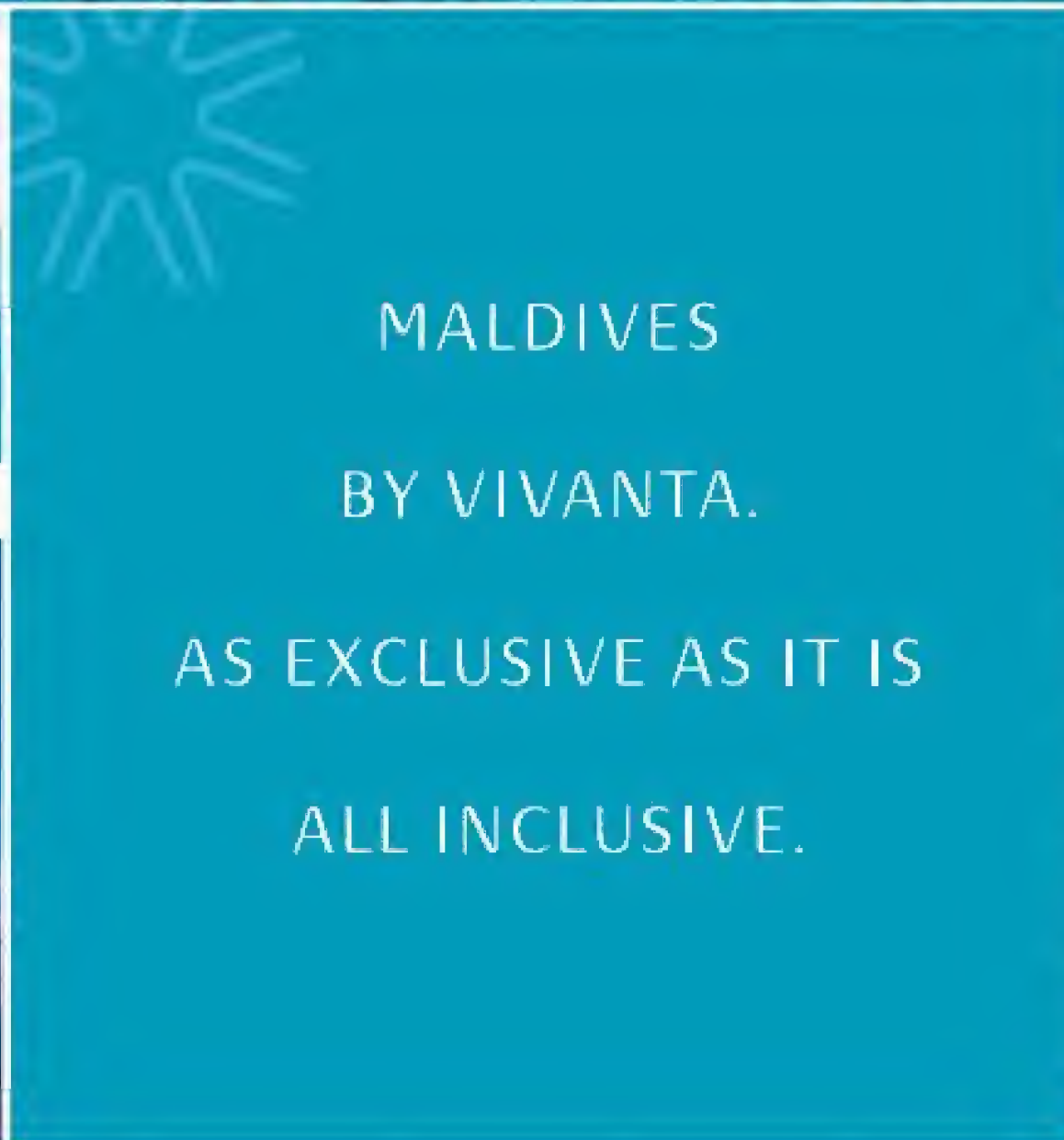
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John Thatcher

Deputy Editor
Richard Jenkins

Features Editor
Lara Brunt

Senior Designer
Andy Knappett

Designer
Emi Dixon

Illustrator
Andrew Thorpe

Sales Manager
Suhail Syed

Production Manager
Chalitha Fernando



Editor's Note

Issue eighty four, April 2015

For most people, the start of the year is when they make plans to head off on a big adventure – but of course, life (and post-winter-holiday blues) tend to get in the way, and April is the perfect time to re-assess and start making those plans come true. Our Adventure Special will take you on a heart-pounding trip through New Zealand, show you what it's like to hike in one of Nepal's most beautiful regions, and why there's plenty of life in Lapland over summer when the winter snows have melted away.

Elsewhere, our fantastically travelled expert Rob Arrow answers your questions on how to get the best out of your trips on page 19, and the Weekends section starting on page 67 rounds up the best wet-and-wild activities to try out in the UAE and beyond, to get the most out of the gorgeous spring weather.

Enjoy the issue, and enjoy planning your own adventures.

Richard Jenkins
Richard@hotmediapublishing.com

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*On the cover:
Canterbury Plains,
New Zealand*



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Tel: 00971 4 364 2876
Fax: 00971 4 369 7494

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Be Here *Now*

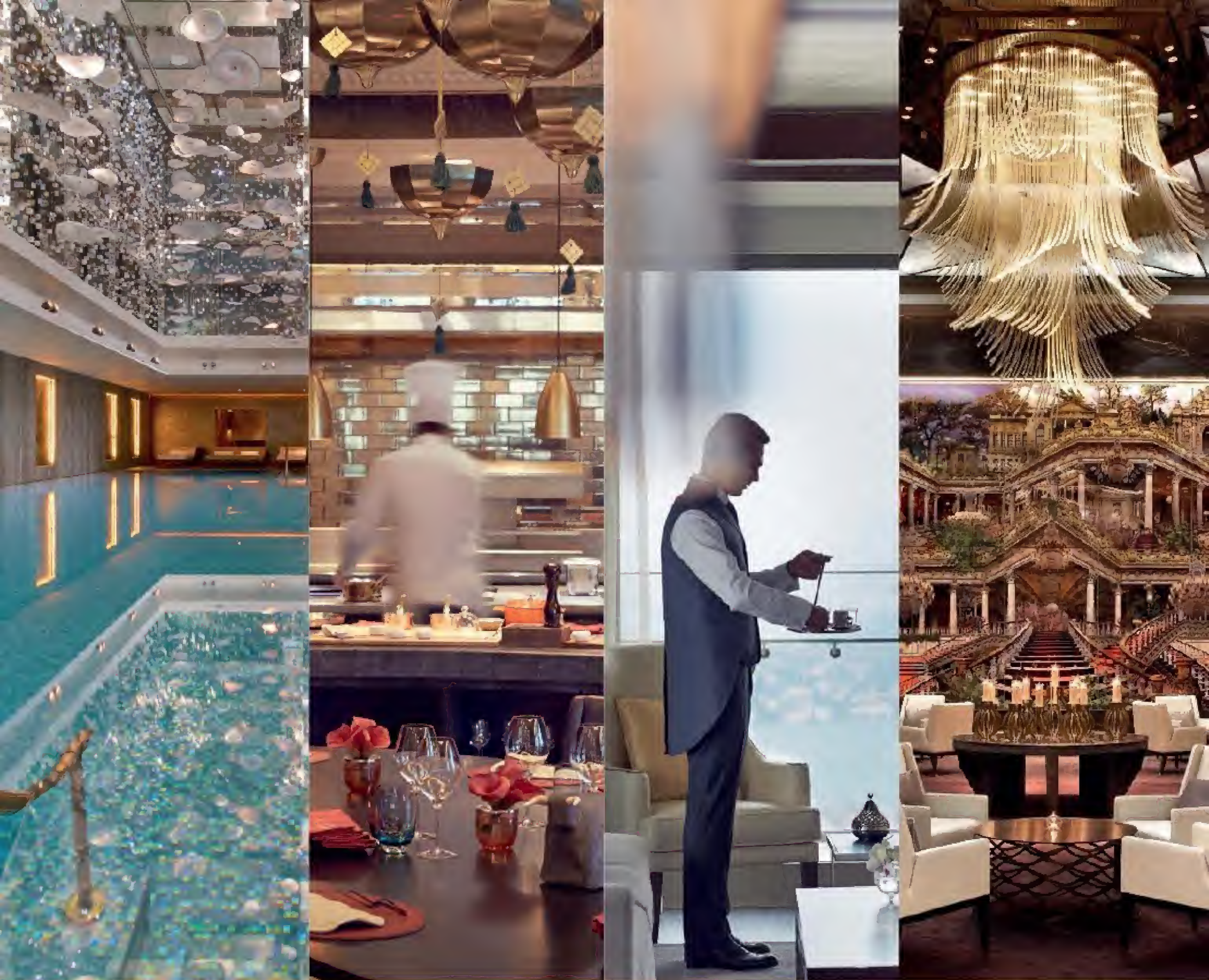
Cinque Terre, Italy

Located in the northwest region of Liguria, Cinque Terre is made up of five picturesque villages - Monterosso, Vernazza, Corniglia, Manarola and Riomaggiore - perched atop the rocky Mediterranean coastline and linked by spectacular hiking trails. Come summer, the villages are packed, making April and May ideal times to visit if you're after a more chilled experience. Hike past terraced vineyards and lemon groves, and wander narrow village streets lined with ancient churches and pastel-hued houses. Then reward your efforts by feasting on local specialities like acciughe (fresh anchovies) and pansotti (ricotta and spinach ravioli with a walnut sauce), washed down with a chilled glass of sciacchetrà.

New Orleans, USA

A decade on from Hurricane Katrina, New Orleans is slowly getting its mojo back. The annual New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival, which takes place from April 24 to May 3, boasts one of the most star-studded line-ups ever, with classic and contemporary heavyweights in rock, rap, pop and R&B. Elton John, The Who, Keith Urban, Ed Sheeran, Pitbull, Jimmy Buffett, No Doubt and Tony Bennett paired with Lady Gaga are just some of the headliners who'll join hundreds of other Louisiana artists at the Fair Grounds. "We really are able now to reach out and get these wonderful people in every genre," says veteran festival director Quint Davis. nojazzfest.com





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Globetrotter

From the world's most anticipated watch to a hotel fit for a future Queen, here's what's hot in travel this month...

Whale of a time

Measuring up to 12 metres and weighing up to 20 tonnes, swimming alongside a whale shark has shot straight to the top of our bucket list. Despite their size, whale sharks are actually gentle giants and their favourite meal is plankton. Here are three top spots to sidle up to the world's largest fish...

Ningaloo Reef, West Australia

Every year from April to July, whale sharks congregate along Australia's largest and most accessible fringing coral reef, a World Heritage site since 2011, which lies around 1,200km north of Perth.

Where to stay: Sal Salis is an exclusive beachside safari camp with just nine luxury tents pitched in the sand dunes, metres from the reef. salsalis.com.au

South Ari Atoll, The Maldives

Smaller whale sharks hang out year-round in the Maldives, although the southern tip of the South Ari Atoll, around Sun Island and Rangali, is a known hotspot.

Where to stay: Only 25 minutes by seaplane from Male, LUX* Maldives has gorgeous villas and white sand beaches. luxresorts.com

Djibouti, East Africa

From mid-October to February, whale sharks gather in the plankton-rich waters of Goubet al Kharab bay, not far from the capital of this tiny nation at the southern end of the Red Sea.

Where to stay: Djibouti Palace Kempinski has elegant rooms, a private beach, two infinity pools and an impressive spa. kempinski.com



On our radar

Aarhus, Denmark

Copenhagen has blazed a trail as one of the world's most exciting gastronomic centres, thanks largely to René Redzepi's seasonal, terroir-led New Nordic cuisine at Noma, and Michelin-starred hotspots such as AOC and Geranium. Now Denmark's second city, Aarhus, is also making a name for itself in the world of gastronomy. The city has been included for the first time in the new Michelin Nordic Cities Guide, with three

restaurants each receiving a coveted star. Leading the charge is Wassim Hallal, the Lebanese-born head chef at Frederikshøj (pictured) with his sophisticated nouvelle-meets-postmodern cuisine and uncompromising quest for the shortest route from farm to fork. Fellow starred establishments are Gastromé, which serves country-inspired cuisine, and SUBSTANS, praised for its creative Danish/French fare.

Travel Download

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App

Hopper

Using data from "billions" of flight prices, this app says when you should buy tickets, claiming it can save you as much as 40 per cent.

Music

New Glow

The fifth album from American indie dance duo Matt & Kim, who are known for their danceable tunes and riotous live shows.

Film

The Imitation Game

The true story of Alan Turing's quest to crack the infamous German Enigma code during World War II.

Book

The Lady from Zagreb

Set in 1942, Philip Kerr's crime drama sees Detective Gunther on the trail of a German actress in hiding.



Great gadget

Watch out

The much-anticipated Apple Watch is released on April 24 and is set to change the way we travel, with a number of apps also ready for launch. Starwood Hotels has designed an app that allows you to check-in and unlock your room door from your nifty new timepiece, no key required. American Airlines is another firm embracing the new technology, with an app that lets you check-in, get flight information and find your baggage claim carousel, all from your Apple Watch. Available in three versions, we've got our eye on the 18-carat rose gold model. apple.com



Hot dish

Icon in the making

Waldorf Salad, Eggs Benedict, Red Velvet Cake... and Celery Risotto Alla Waldorf? The latter may one day be as famous as the iconic signature dishes that have been created at Waldorf Astoria over the years, after the dish recently scooped the Taste of Waldorf Astoria New York competition. Created by three Michelin-starred chef Heinz Beck and rising star David Posey, the risotto now appears on the menu at 26 Waldorf Astoria hotels across the world, including those in Ras Al Khaimah and Dubai's Palm Jumeirah. Meanwhile, Chef Posey, formerly of Chicago's influential Blackbird, is set to open his own restaurant next year in the Windy City and is definitely one to watch.

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New opening
**Anantara Siam
Bangkok Hotel**

After a tumultuous 2014 – months of anti-government protests saw tourist numbers plummet – Bangkok is back on many travellers' hotlists. Latest figures show that visitor arrivals from the UAE surged 115 per cent in January, while arrivals from the Middle East were up 31 per cent. Just opened in the heart of the Ratchaprasong shopping and entertainment district, Anantara Siam Bangkok Hotel has 354 rooms and suites decorated with teak furnishings, silk fabrics and Thai artefacts. The colourful lobby, meanwhile, features frescoed ceilings and a sweeping central staircase showcasing traditional Thai architecture and artwork. When not poolside, foodies will enjoy sampling Thai, Japanese and Italian cuisine at the hotel's ten restaurants, or you might want to book a table at nearby Gaggan. Known for Indian cuisine with an ultra-modern twist – chef Gaggan Anand was the first Indian to undertake an internship with Ferran Adrià's research team at el Bulli – the restaurant recently scooped the number one spot at the San Pellegrino Asia's 50 Best Restaurant Awards.



New eats
Rollercoaster restaurant

The UAE is not short of gimmicks, but a new restaurant delivering dishes to your table by rollercoaster has to be one of the most fun. Located in Yas Mall, ROGO'S serves up seriously good looking comfort food from the Americas, Europe and Asia via a network of 30 individual rollercoaster tracks. rogos.rest



Travel must-have
Modern vintage

Vintage styling meets hi-tech accessories in Swedish brand Holger's new 2015 bag collection. Made from recyclable fibre and with a sleek leather finish, the range includes a backpack and messenger bag in black, blue, green, brown and orange. Best of all, the bags come equipped with a rechargeable power-bank, designed to power laptops, tablets or phones – perfect for travellers on the go. holgerbags.com

Fit for a queen

London's The Goring hotel – where Kate Middleton famously stayed before her marriage to Prince William in 2011 – recently reopened after the final phase of a top-to-toe refurbishment for its 105th birthday. The Duchess of Cambridge was on hand to officially cut the ribbon, with every room and suite of the venerable hotel, located just moments from Buckingham Palace, sporting a new look, thanks to designers David Linley, Nina Campbell, Tim Gosling and Russell Sage. Last on the list was the Front Hall (pictured), redesigned by Sage and now clad in hand-painted wallpaper by Fromental, which took four artists almost eight weeks to create. "It's luxurious and glamorous, it recognises our past, but it's also sophisticated and very contemporary," says owner Jeremy Goring. thegoring.com



MY CITY

Beirut



Tala Hajjar

The Starch Foundation director shares her must-visit places in the Lebanese capital

Check-in to **The Albergo**, an incredibly cosy and luxurious hotel in the Achrafieh district, a stone's throw from the city centre, where a delicious breakfast awaits you. To get a flavour of Beirut's cultural melting pot, have a long stroll along the **Corniche** in Manara, then pop into the wonderful little museum in **Ain el Mreisseh** displaying items collected from the sea by a local fisherman over three decades - a real undiscovered gem that not many people know about. Contemporary art fans should head to **Beirut Exhibition Center** in the new Waterfront district and

Carwan Gallery in Mar Mikhael, while design lovers should visit **XXe Siècle Gallery** in the lively neighbourhood of Hamra; it specialises in vintage furniture and mid-century designers such as **Jean Royere**, **Joe Colombo** and **Oscar Niemeyer**. For the fashion forward, don't miss **Starch Foundation's** boutique in Saifi Village, Downtown Beirut. Founded in 2008, Starch is devoted to **emerging Lebanese designers**; every year, we help four to six young designers develop their debut fashion and jewellery collections, which are then showcased in the boutique. Other top spots include **Orient 499**, a boutique and atelier in Mina El Hosn featuring clothes and accessories from Lebanon, Syria, Turkey and Morocco, and the **Port District**, which is home to boutiques by haute couture designer **Rabih Kayrouz** and accessories designer **Johnny Farah**. For lunch, grab a shawarma from **Boubouffe** in Achrafieh, or linger longer at **Tawlet**, the restaurant in Mar Mikhael that's linked to the weekly **Souk El Tayeb** farmers' market, which sees a different cook prepare regional specialities each day. Come dinnertime, book a table at **Casablanca** on the seafront in Ain el Mreisseh, known for its excellent lobster; **Al Halabi** in Antelias for traditional Lebanese; and **Le Phenicien** in Sin El Fil for their fish and incredible tabbouleh. Clink glasses at **Dragonfly** in

Gemmayze, which has fantastic cocktails and great jazzy playlists; **Kissproof** in Badaro, Beirut's new hip neighbourhood; and the **Duke of Wellington** in Hamra for a '70s flashback. Then head to **The Grand Factory** on Fridays and **Music Hall** and **Playroom** for some kitschy fun. Meanwhile, if it's peace and quiet you're after, visit the **American University of Beirut** in the Ras Beirut area. Perched on a hill, the lush AUB campus has amazing views of the sparkling Mediterranean Sea. You should also visit **Papercup** in Mar Mikhael to enjoy the best cappuccino in town while you browse their wonderful collection of books. And an unforgettable place I've visited in the city is **Khandaq al-Ghamiq** and the surrounding area of **Basta**. Located near Downtown, the area served as a demarcation line during the Civil War from 1975 to 1990. Today, it's home to crumbling, yet lavish European-style architecture and a mix of cultures. Make time for a couple of day trips, too. I recommend **Batroun**, a coastal city 50km north of the capital with a charming old town; the **Qadisha Valley**, where you'll find caves and sanctuaries that were inhabited from the third millennium B.C. until the Roman period; and the cedar forests of **Barouk**. Lastly, don't leave without stocking up on **Lebanese za'atar** (thyme mix) and **nuts**.



Located a 45-minute scenic seaplane ride from Male in the unspoilt Noonu Atoll, The Sun Siyam Iru Fushi rises like a pearl out of the Indian Ocean. Set within 52 acres of white sands and exotic flora, here guests are immersed in a timeless culture. From the intuitive detail and personalised service that creates the most beautiful of memories, to the sublime ambience that permeates each unforgettable taste, touch and experience, at Iru Fushi the incredible awaits.

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Ask the EXPERT

Rob Arrow is a product manager at dnata and a self-confessed hotel geek. With nearly a decade of experience in the luxury travel industry, Rob loves nothing more than talking hotels and discovering destinations. His favourite country is Lebanon, his favourite city Los Angeles and his dream is to one day own his own boutique retreat in the Italian Alps.

Q. I always travel to Europe over the summer, but tend to stick to France, Switzerland and Germany. Can you recommend some alternatives?


A. The increase in connections from the region has opened many opportunities to explore Europe during the long summer periods. Of course, when travelling to Europe it often depends on what you wish to do. As we often look at getting away from the heat of the Arabian summer, two multi-stop touring destinations that spring to mind are **Austria**, **Hungary** and the **Czech Republic**, or **Denmark** and **Sweden**. Austria is becoming an attractive alternative to Switzerland, from the Imperial city of **Vienna** with its summer palaces to the musical romance in **Salzburg**. Or why not fly to design-led **Copenhagen** and walk the waterways, before catching a train to **Malmö** and onwards to **Stockholm**, passing picturesque lakes and forests? Other great destinations include **Ireland** and its stunning West Coast journeys, or **Scotland** and the lush green hills of the Highlands.



Q. My wife wants a beach holiday, but I'm more interested in culture and museums. Where can we go that offers both of these things?

A. Trying to build a trip based on the best for both parties is always tough, however, there are a number of places that fit the bill. Within the region, **Muscat** offers beautiful beachside resorts, a lively Corniche, interesting museums such as Bait al-Baranda, plus day trips to the Hajar mountains and the historic town of Nizwa. A little further afield, **Jordan** is the perfect destination for mixing learning and relaxing, from ancient ruins

in Amman and Petra to chilling out at the Dead Sea and the Red Sea resort of Aqaba. In Europe, **Athens** is often overlooked but it's home to some amazing museums and the magnificent Acropolis, while beautiful resorts such as Aman's Amanz'oe or Grand Resort Lagonissi by Starwood are just two hours away. Further afield, **Cape Town** has stunning beaches, cultural hotspots like Robben Island and some great museums and galleries, including those concentrated along Museum Mile. **Los Angeles** is another long-haul winner where you can choose between hitting the beach or exploring one of the many well-maintained museums, such as the Getty Center and LACMA.

A night scene with many floating lanterns over a body of water. The lanterns are lit and floating in the air, with their light reflecting on the water below. The background is a dark blue night sky.

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Chef's TOP TABLES

German-born Alexander Stumpf is the executive chef of Sass Café Dubai, the first international outpost of the exclusive Monaco hotspot. He shares his favourite dining destinations around the world...



Asian Room at Novikov, London, UK

Order: *Fresh seafood*

The Asian Room is a mix of all cuisines from the East and you can choose from sushi to robata, wok dishes to dim sum, tempura to cold dishes like duck salad. Seafood such as black grouper, red snapper and live langoustine and lobster are caught in the early hours of the morning and then air freighted to London, arriving at the restaurant in the afternoon. The catch of the day is arranged in an ice display in front of the open kitchen and you can choose whatever you like, cooked the way you want. Not to be missed.



North End Grill, New York, USA

Order: *28-day dry-aged Prime Ribeye steak*

North End Grill boasts a raw bar and an open kitchen serving steaks, fish and seafood from a wood-fired charcoal grill. My pick is the Prime Ribeye steak, cooked medium rare with the smoky taste from the wood-fired grill, and then sliced into big pieces so when it arrives at your table, you can see the smooth pink colour. Complementing the steak are the chips cooked in three steps so they are crunchy on the outside and so soft on the inside.



Cvi.Che 105, Miami, USA

Order: *Trilogy sliced fish tiradito*

Miami is the epicentre of a lot of Latin American culture in the US and this Peruvian restaurant has an amazing ceviche bar, splendid food and great signature cocktails. Trilogy sliced fish tiradito is a peppery ceviche made from an assorted seafood combination with a yellow Peruvian pepper sauce, giving it the right amount of bite. Also, I love the cancha served here - warmed Peruvian corn nuts made from maiz chulpe, a variety of corn that pops without puffing up.



Sushi Dai at Tsukiji Market, Tokyo, Japan

Order: *Sushi, sashimi and maki*

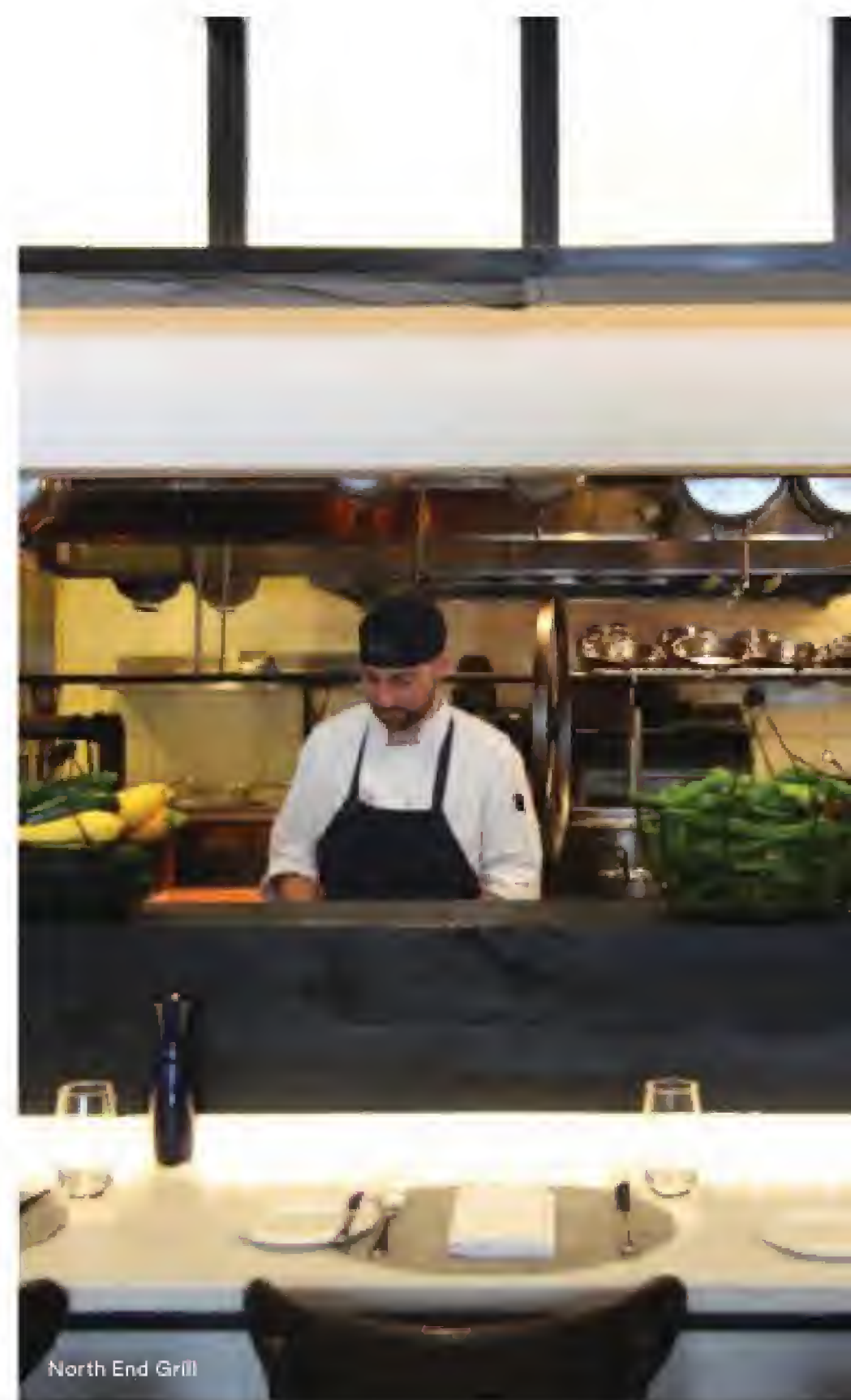
Japan is the only country in the world that has a profession focussed only on serving raw seafood to perfection. Sushi Dai is the best place for a traditional Japanese breakfast - arrive around 6-7am, after you've finished your tour of the market. You'll find a small sushi bar with 14 counter seats in a room the size of a small London apartment. Chu-toro or aji (mackerel) nigiri, uni gunkan and a live ika (squid) sashimi of the chef's selection are amazing - a taste you just cannot find outside of Japan.



101 Lounge, One&Only The Palm, Dubai, UAE

Order: *Sautéed baby spinach and chicken chorizo salad*

In a tranquil setting surrounded by water, this Mediterranean restaurant and lounge offers amazing views of Palm Jumeirah and JBR. The best-seller is the sautéed baby spinach salad with chicken chorizo. Both the spinach and chorizo are perfectly sautéed in the same frying pan so the flavour from the chorizo transfers to the spinach and there's still a bit of crunch. Raisins and pine nuts add extra crunch and sweetness.



North End Grill



Novikov



101 Lounge

Spotlight On Bucharest

Romania's capital blends old European charm with cultural and architectural diversity



Eat and Drink

the ARTIST

Renowned for its adventurous plating as much as its food, this landmark restaurant is the brainchild of Dutchman Paul Oppenkamp, who creates “sculptures” out of food. The three course menu is complemented by amuse bouche and extra treats from the chef.

Origo Coffee Shop

A day's sightseeing needs some caffeine fuel, and Origo has a special atmosphere and the best java in town. Look up as you approach the bar to see dozens of coffee cups suspended from the ceiling, a quirky decoration that travellers love.

Mica Elvetie

Bucharest is a fascinating mix of old and new, and Mica Elvetie is in the heart of the old town, standing in one of Bucharest's oldest buildings. Its no-nonsense cuisine has been impressing diners for years, and everyone in town would recommend stopping by.

Best Buildings

House of the Free Press

An impressive edifice standing in the northern part of the city since 1956, Casa Scanteii housed almost all of Romania's capital printing presses, and is now also the home of the Bucharest Stock Exchange. Designed to replicate Moscow's Lomonosov University building, the imposing structure is a must-see.

The Arch of Triumph

First built out of wood in 1922 to honour the bravery of Romanian soldiers in WWI, Bucharest's own Arc de Triomphe was finished in granite in 1936. At 85 feet high, the interior staircase allows visitors to climb up for a panoramic view of the city and the arch's surrounding sculptures.

Calea Victoriei

Bucharest's oldest and most charming street dates back to 1962, linking the Old Princely Court to Mogosoaia Palace, and was initially paved with huge oak beams. It's here that most of the city's fashion boutiques first

made their homes, and a stroll through is imperative to any traveller.

Parliament Palace

Even visitors from the GCC will be impressed by the sheer size of the government's home, which is the second biggest administrative building in the world (after America's Pentagon). It stands at 12 stories, 1,100 rooms and houses four underground levels, including a massive nuclear bunker.

• Don't miss

Bucharest, like many European cities, is best seen on foot. Guided Bucharest allows travellers to join their free walking tours, from Vlad the Impaler's house through to some of the newer sights, taking in bars and cafes along the way.

guided-bucharest.com

*Paradise awaits at the Baros
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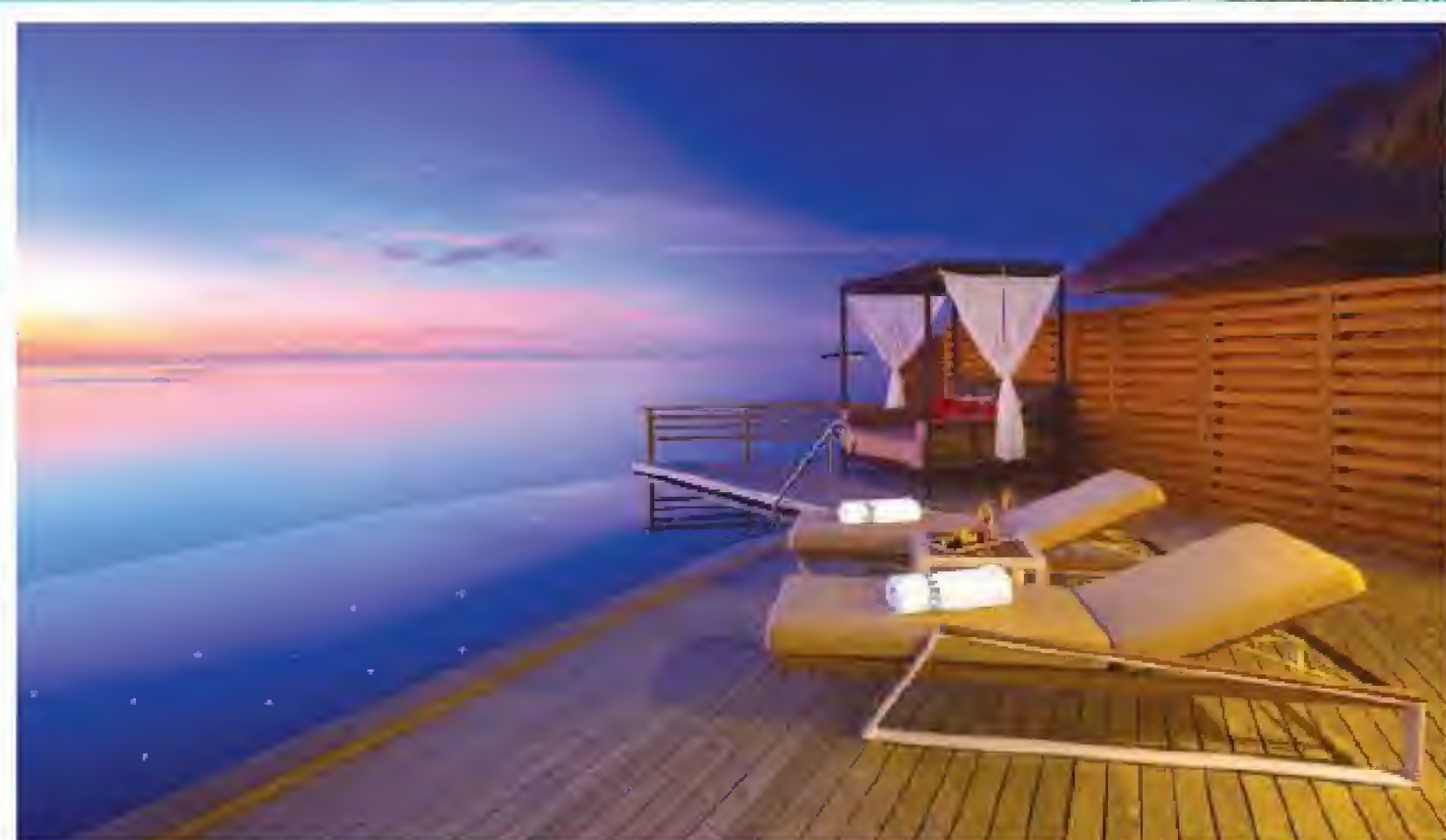
Ultimate Luxury HIDE -AWAY



Nestled within the tropical and idyllic setting of Baros Maldives and conveniently accessible by a short 20-minute speedboat ride from Malé Airport, a sanctuary of the highest luxury awaits. The Baros Residence, the most exclusive and luxurious villa at this boutique resort, is the perfect setting for GCC residents to relax and rejuvenate in ultimate privacy and comfort. With its 268-square-metres of refined elegance, private swimming pool and personal butler on call 24 hours, the Baros Residence villa provides the quintessential harmonious and secluded hideaway.

Escape the extreme summer temperatures of the GCC to a perfect average temperature of 30°C, sunshine and the occasional refreshing tropical showers; you will enjoy the perfect holiday weather – providing an appealing antidote to the monotonous Middle Eastern summer temperatures.

For your ultimate comfort, discover a shaded veranda with a canopied four-poster daybed, deck loungers and sitting area, your own private swimming pool, a luxurious



bathroom and a linen-canopied bed – all in rooms of granite and tropical timbers.

The experience is just as much about luxury and pure indulgence as its tranquil surroundings. Complimentary high-speed Internet access will connect you instantly and you can stay entertained with a vast array of options in the DVD and CD library, with a Bose surround sound system, and a library of coffee table books and paperbacks. To complete the experience, the spa service allows you to enjoy in-room spa massages in absolute privacy.

Baros offers no shortage of activities to make your stay at this elegant resort unforgettable. You can indulge in a dinner cruise or al fresco gourmet dining, take in a breathtaking dolphin cruise at sunset or explore the vibrant marine life by going snorkeling and diving at the vibrant Baros reef.

Your stay at the Baros Residence will be an experience of exquisite and dedicated personal luxury, unlike any other. For further information on Baros Maldives, please visit www.baros.com

A taste of Home

*Manzil Downtown Dubai is
the city's most exciting new
dining destination*



Simple and authentic, contemporary and cool. That's how executive chef Spencer Lee Black sums up the dining experience at Manzil Downtown Dubai, the city's new upscale boutique hotel. "I've used different cuisines, from Arabic to Moroccan, with spices like cinnamon and cumin and a lot fresh herbs," he says. "I've kept it simple, which is sometimes the hardest thing to do. You need the best produce and ingredients and the right amount of seasoning and spice."

Boulevard Kitchen is the hotel's signature, all-day dining restaurant serving food from the greater Middle East region, while The Courtyard at the heart of the hotel offers al fresco dining and shisha. The terrace café, meanwhile, overlooks Mohammed Bin Rashid Boulevard and offers Arab-fusion beverages and delectable desserts.

Manzil prides itself on offering

guests traditional Arabian hospitality in hip surrounds and that's something Chef Black has been keen to embrace in his food. "I look more at how the dish is presented and try to stay true to its origins. For instance, I like to use a mix of different plates on the table – cast-iron, wood, copper, ceramic – which makes it feel more homely," he says. "But if Moroccans, for example, come to Manzil, I want them to try the tajine and say 'that's how it's done'."

The menus at Boulevard Kitchen and The Courtyard feature hot and cold mezze, such as shrimps sautéed in lemon and tomato with toasted almonds, capers and mint and roast beetroot and orange salad drizzled with orange water and cinnamon, and mains such as prawn machboos, chicken tajine and shish taouk.

Chef Black has also introduced a large selection of nose-to-tail dishes, featuring locally sourced

lamb whenever possible. Highlights include smoky sajouk sausage in pomegranate syrup and dried fig; braised lamb shank with white beans and tomato; and lamb fries sautéed in lemon, garlic and mint. "I think the greatest thing about Middle Eastern food is that you can't come by yourself – it's all about sharing, rather than individual portions," he says.

Emirati chef Shaikha Al Ali has also created a handful of desserts with imaginative twists on local favourites. Be sure to try the Karak Bomboloni, an Italian donut similar to the Emirati lugeimat stuffed with tea-infused custard and topped with crunchy caramelised popcorn. "We've just launched our Afternoon Tea in the terrace café, which will feature these sweets, along with sandwiches, scones, macaroons and regional teas," says Black. *For more information, visit VIDA-hotels.com*

WIN!

*Dinner for two at
Boulevard Kitchen*

Sample Manzil Downtown Dubai's Middle Eastern menus for yourself. To be in with a chance of winning dinner for two at Boulevard Kitchen, just tell us the dish you'd most love to try at the hotel. Email your choice to easywin@hotmediapublishing.com before April 30.

Terms and conditions apply to the prize

Swim, Sleep, Spa, Repeat.

After the ultimate massage? The Spa at The Miami Beach EDITION has one of the most comprehensive customised massage menus around. Alongside traditional Thai, Shiatsu and Hot Stone treatments, you can build-your-own massage, choosing the touch (including gentle, deep and pregnancy); style (such as nurturing, energetic or flowing); and oil (energising, detoxing and even nut-free) that suits you. Upgrade your massage with “quick fixes” like oxygen inhalation to enhance your skin and a power nap that simulates four hours of sleep in just 20 minutes, or add a touch of reflexology or Biotic Wave therapy to target pain. Join the beach boot camp, laze by the lushly landscaped pools or just retreat to your oceanfront suite, ready to do it all again tomorrow. editionhotels.com

Style & Wellness





Magnificent Boot Camp Basics

(1) Nike leggings (2) Friends Layla headphones (3) Adidas by Stella McCartney hoodie (4) Nike Pro Indy crop top (5) Longchamp backpack (6) Athletic Propulsion Labs sneakers (7) Nike t-shirt. Available at Net-A-Porter.com and longchamp.com

Cosy Cashmere

Lightweight and luxurious, cashmere is the perfect companion for long-haul flights

It's super soft and looks great, but cashmere is also practical and long lasting, as it rarely pills after being worn and washed and actually becomes softer with age. Invest in these on-board essentials...

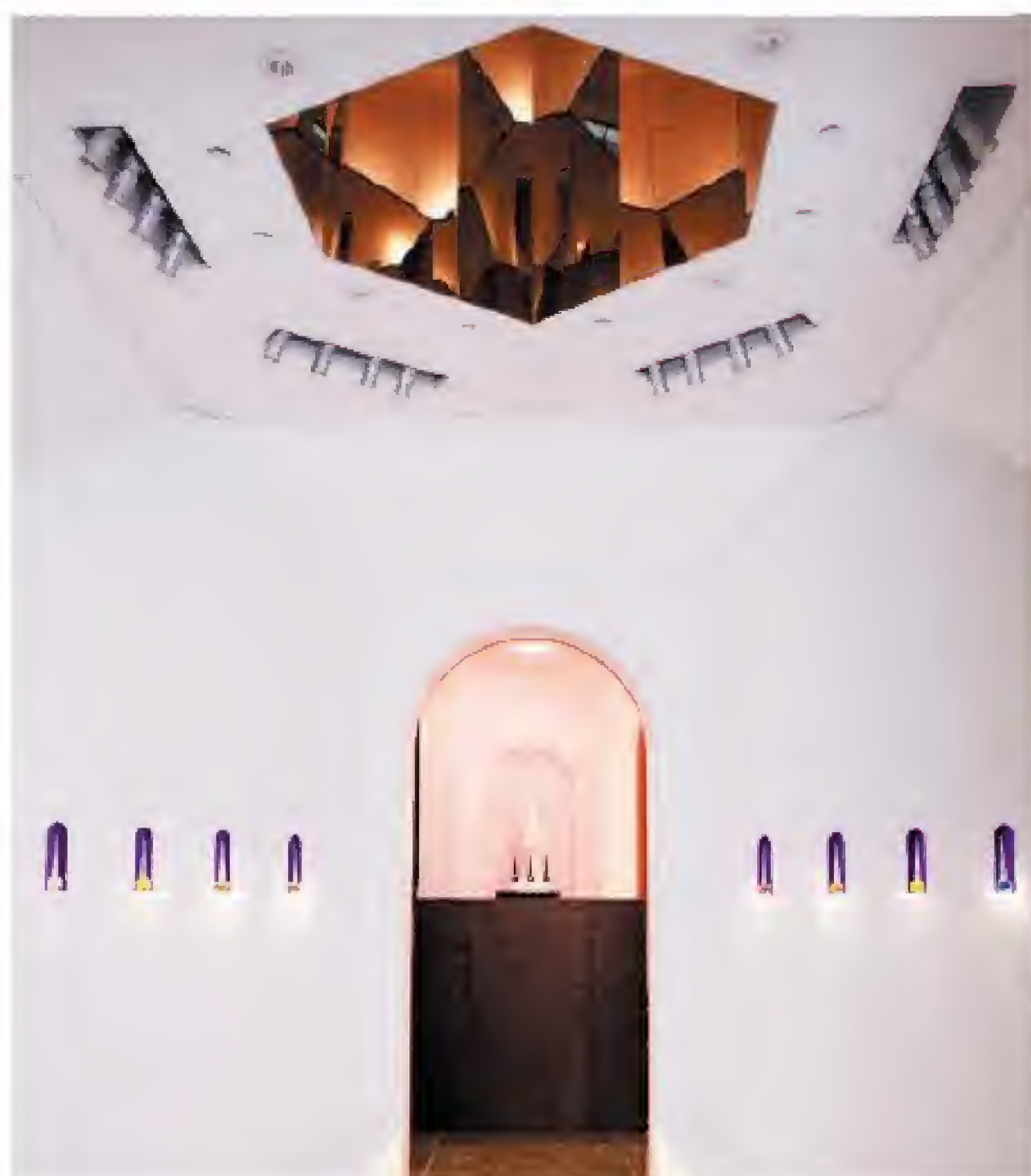


Woven from the world's most exclusive yarns, Sophia Cashmere's super-soft blankets and cashmere-lined eye masks will have you in the land of nod in next to no time. The set includes a handy zipper bag too. sofiacashmere.com

Designer Dreams

Heading to a fashion capital? Add these designer boutiques to your hit-list

In Paris, Christian Louboutin has opened his first beauty boutique (right) in Galerie Véro-Dodat, a 19th-century covered arcade in the first arrondissement. While so far it just stocks Louboutin Nail Colour, the designer's debut range, plans are afoot for more beauty launches this year. Meanwhile, in Milan, Giorgio Armani has unveiled his latest 'it' bag to celebrate the fashion house's 40th anniversary. Crafted from fine Italian leather and finished with gold-plated metalwear, the limited edition Le Sac 11 is available this month in selected Armani boutiques in Milan, Paris and Dubai.



Forget bulky jackets and jumpers – a cashmere cardigan is a must-have for stylish flyers. Eric Bompard's SS15 knits in zingy lemon, tangerine or lime will keep you comfortable in even the most temperamental air conditioning. eric-bompard.com



D-Day

Turkey

Turkey's luxurious D-Hotel Maris reopens for the summer season on April 29. The resort features an exceptional ESPA facility with soothing hammam rituals and an Aegean seashell massage, plus the Bodyism fitness programme created by A-list trainer James Duigan and favoured by supermodels Rosie Huntington-Whiteley and Elle Macpherson. Personal training sessions are complemented by Duigan's Clean & Lean dishes, although the hotel's restaurants (including Zuma and Michelin-starred Il Riccio) may test your willpower. Elsewhere, there are five private beaches, a stunning swimming pool carved into the cliff edge and a fleet of luxurious yachts, catamarans and water toys to keep you entertained. lhw.com



WORLD TRAVELLER Reader Offers



A

USA

Viceroy New York

4 nights from USD865 per person

Special offer: Stay 3 nights and receive an extra night free

Includes: Stay in a Viceroy Deluxe Room with return airport transfers

Validity: April 1-April 19, 2015

Spend a night in the Big Apple in style with this sensational offer that incorporates all that's great about New York City. Viceroy New York has unparalleled views of the city from its rooftop bar, and some of the finest five-star service in town.

B

Spain

Gran Meliá Don Pepe, Marbella

5 nights from USD650 per person

Special offer: Complimentary upgrade to a Superior Mountain View Room for honeymooners with a gala dinner for two and a fruit basket on arrival*

Includes: Stay in Classic Mountain View Room with breakfast daily

Validity: Now 'til Apr 30, 2015
*5 night minimum stay

A mountaintop retreat awaits those who book a stay here, where wellbeing rules.

C

Italy

Il Salviatino

3 nights from USD 810 per person

Special offer: 10% early booking discount*

Includes: Stay in a Double Deluxe Room with breakfast daily and return airport transfers

Validity: Now 'til Apr 30, 2015.
*Black-out dates apply; book by Apr 23, 2015; minimum 7 days before travel date.

This luxury hotel in Florence is ideal for couples who are looking for a romantic getaway with plenty of great food.

D

Mauritius

Sofitel Mauritius l'Imperial Resort & Spa

7 nights from USD1090 per person

Special offer: Stay 5 nights and receive an additional 2 nights free plus children under 12 years stay and eat free

Includes: Stay in a Superior Room with breakfast and dinner daily and return airport transfers

Validity: May 4-Sep 30, 2015

When it comes to tropical paradise, Mauritius has the competition beat. For a longer stay, this offer is terrific.



dnata

How to Book

You can book these offers by calling dnata on

+971 4 316 6666

Or by visiting dnatatravel.com. Terms and conditions apply. On the same site you can also sign up to dnata's newsletter and receive more offers direct to your inbox.

E

Maldives

Sheraton Maldives Full Moon Resort & Spa

4 nights from USD560 per person

Special offer: Stay 3 nights and receive an additional night free plus 10% discount on room rate and complimentary speedboat transfers

Includes: Stay in a Deluxe Room with breakfast daily

Validity: Apr 15-Jul 15, 2015

A weekend escape is tempting, and when you combine a fourth night for free then a long weekend becomes as much fun as a week long holiday.

F

Thailand

Angsana Laguna Resort and Spa, Phuket

3 nights starting from USD215 per person

Special offer: Reduced room rates by 20%

Includes: Stay in Laguna Room with breakfast daily and return airport transfers

Validity: Apr 20-Aug 31, 2015

The land of adventure, Phuket is also the land of luxury for discerning travellers. The Angsana Laguna Resort & Spa is one of Banyan Tree's finest - it's in their home town, after all, so you'd expect nothing less.

G

Malaysia

The Ritz Carlton Hotel Kuala Lumpur

3 nights from USD235 per person

Special offer: Reduced rates by 15%

Includes: Stay in Deluxe Room with breakfast daily and return airport transfers

Validity: Apr 20-May 31, 2015

Late spring is the perfect time to visit Malaysia, as the weather begins to heat up before the stickiness of summer and the monsoon season. At these reduced rates it's also a fabulously cheap getaway.

H

Singapore

St Regis Singapore

3 nights from USD550 per person

Special offer: Reduced rates by 15%

Includes: Stay in Executive Deluxe Room with breakfast daily and return airport transfers

Validity: Apr 20-Aug 31, 2015

The city-state may be one of the smallest countries in the world but it is jam-packed with stunning hotels, entertainment and fine dining options from across the world.



DNATA'S
FANTASTIC FOUR

Rooms with a View

These beautiful hotels all offer picture-postcard views, so don't forget your camera

I

Austria

Hilton Vienna Plaza, Vienna

3 nights from USD410 per person

Special offer: 25% room rate reduction

Includes: Stay in a Hilton Plaza Room with breakfast daily and return airport transfers

Validity: Apr 1-30, 2015

Vienna is one of the most culturally significant cities in Europe, enjoy glorious architecture and dining.

J

Egypt

Kempinski Hotel Soma Bay, Soma bay

3 nights from USD410 per person

Special offer: 15% room rate deduction plus complimentary upgrade to Junior Suite

***Includes:** Stay in a Lagoon View Room with breakfast daily, safari trip with dinner and return airport transfers

Validity: May 1-Jul 26, 2015

* Book by Apr 30, 2015

Put simply - it's paradise.

K

UAE

Eastern Mangroves Hotel & Spa by Anantara

3 nights from USD245 per person

Special offer: 25% room rate reduction

Includes: Stay in a Deluxe Mangroves Balcony with breakfast daily

Validity: Apr 1-30, 2015

Spacious, airy and stylish with great restaurants and a beautiful infinity pool that overlooks the mangroves.

L

Australia

Four Seasons Hotel, Sydney

3 nights from USD510 per person

Specil offer: Stay three nights and receive an additional night free

Includes: Stay in Deluxe City View Room with breakfast daily and return airport transfers

A long-haul flight needs a suitably glamorous destination. Sydney's city views are it.

DRIVE TIME

Enjoy up to 20% off your summer bookings with Hertz



The summer will soon be here, so now is the time to take advantage of our 20% discount on Worldwide* car hire. All you need do is book before April 30 and you can pick up your car anytime between May 1-August 31 for a minimum 1 week hire. What's more, you can select your car from the People Movers, Prestige Collection, Family Collection and Large Premium fleets.

Offer Summary

Reservations from: Apr 1-30

Hire period: May 1-Aug 31

Hire duration: Minimum 1 week

Pick up discount: Up to 20%

***Worldwide Destinations for hire:** North America: USA/Canada, Corporate Europe: Belgium; Czech Republic; France; Germany; Italy; Luxembourg; Netherlands; Slovakia; Spain; UK
Franchisee Europe: Switzerland, Austria
Australasia: Australia, New Zealand, Middle East: Kuwait, Jordan, Saudi Arabia

Terms and conditions

- Advance reservations via the contact details opposite is required and excludes walk-up rentals.

- Vehicle models vary between countries and subject to availability.
- An additional fee is liable on 'pre paid' reservations if the booking is cancelled after 7 days of the original booking time. The fee is AED 200, SAR 200, KWD 20, OMR 25, QAR 200, BHD 25, USD 60.
- Minimum age restrictions apply on Hertz Prestige Collection™ fleet.
- Hertz standard terms and conditions apply.
- The offer cannot be combined with any other promotion and may be withdrawn at any time.

For enquiries and booking, contact: hertz@dnata.com

The Great Outdoors on Yas Island

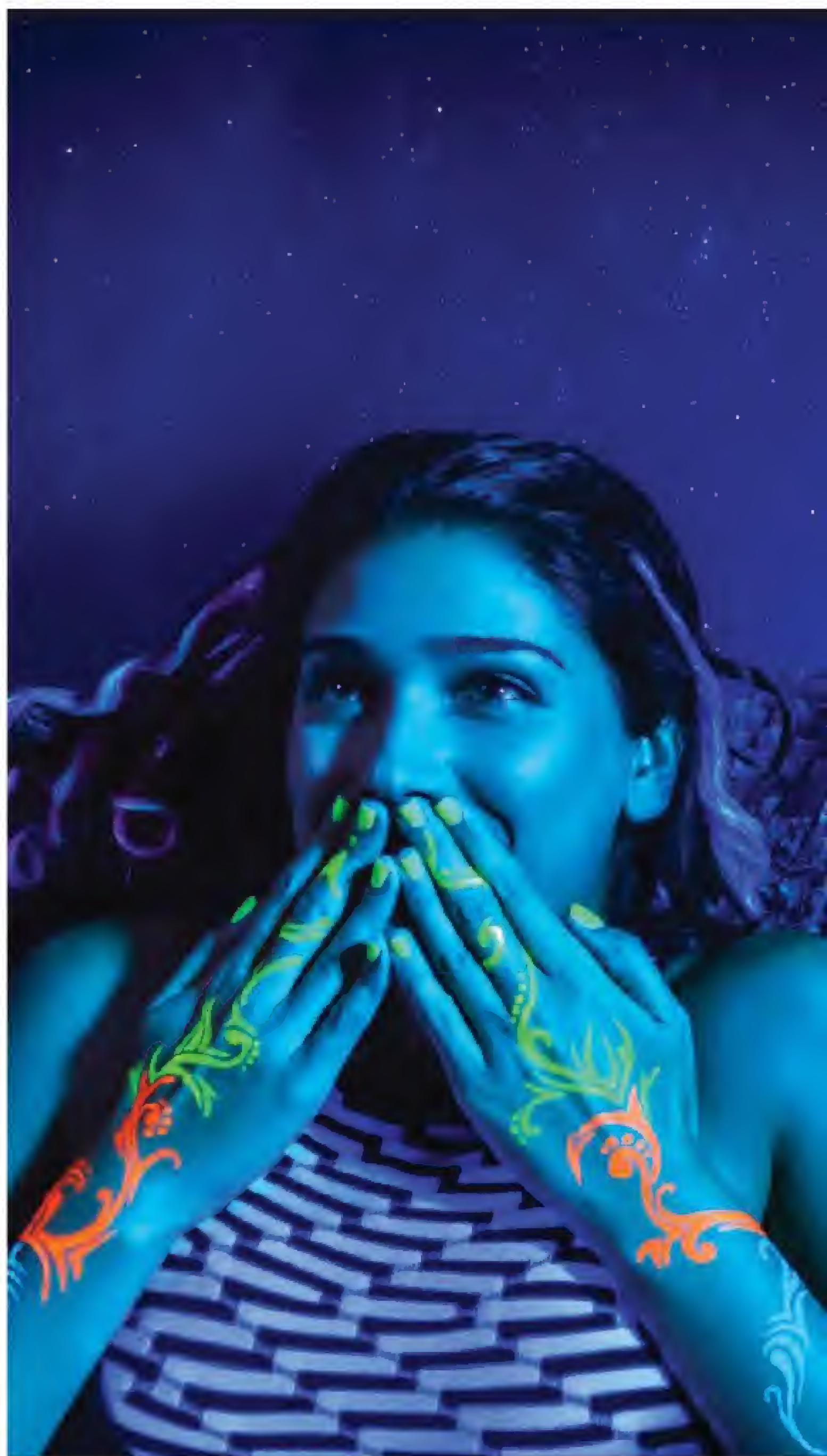
Take advantage of the springtime weather and enjoy the sights and sounds found outdoors.



The great thing about spring in the UAE is the opportunity to get outside and have fun before the hot summer season begins. Yas Island is home to a plethora of resorts and activities that will allow friends and family to have fun in the sun. Whether you're looking for bright and breezy outdoor terraces or action-packed parks to spend a whole day, Yas has all the answers.

Donut Dunk

Eco-Donut electric boats are now available to charter from Yas Marina, which let you glide along the Yas Island channel and enjoy the sights of the island in a fun and unique way. Each donut can comfortably carry up to six people, and the boats are so easy to control anybody can be the captain! WT recommends packing a picnic, loading up the family and floating off into memory-making happiness.



Movie Magic

What's better than watching a movie under the stars? Watching one under the stars at Yas Marina! Every Tuesday at 7:30pm, a classic movie is shown on the huge projector, making it ideal for a romantic excursion. On Fridays, the screen shows classic and new kids' movies, with the Disney films always proving an excellent singalong. You'll find the screen on the lawn next to Iris.

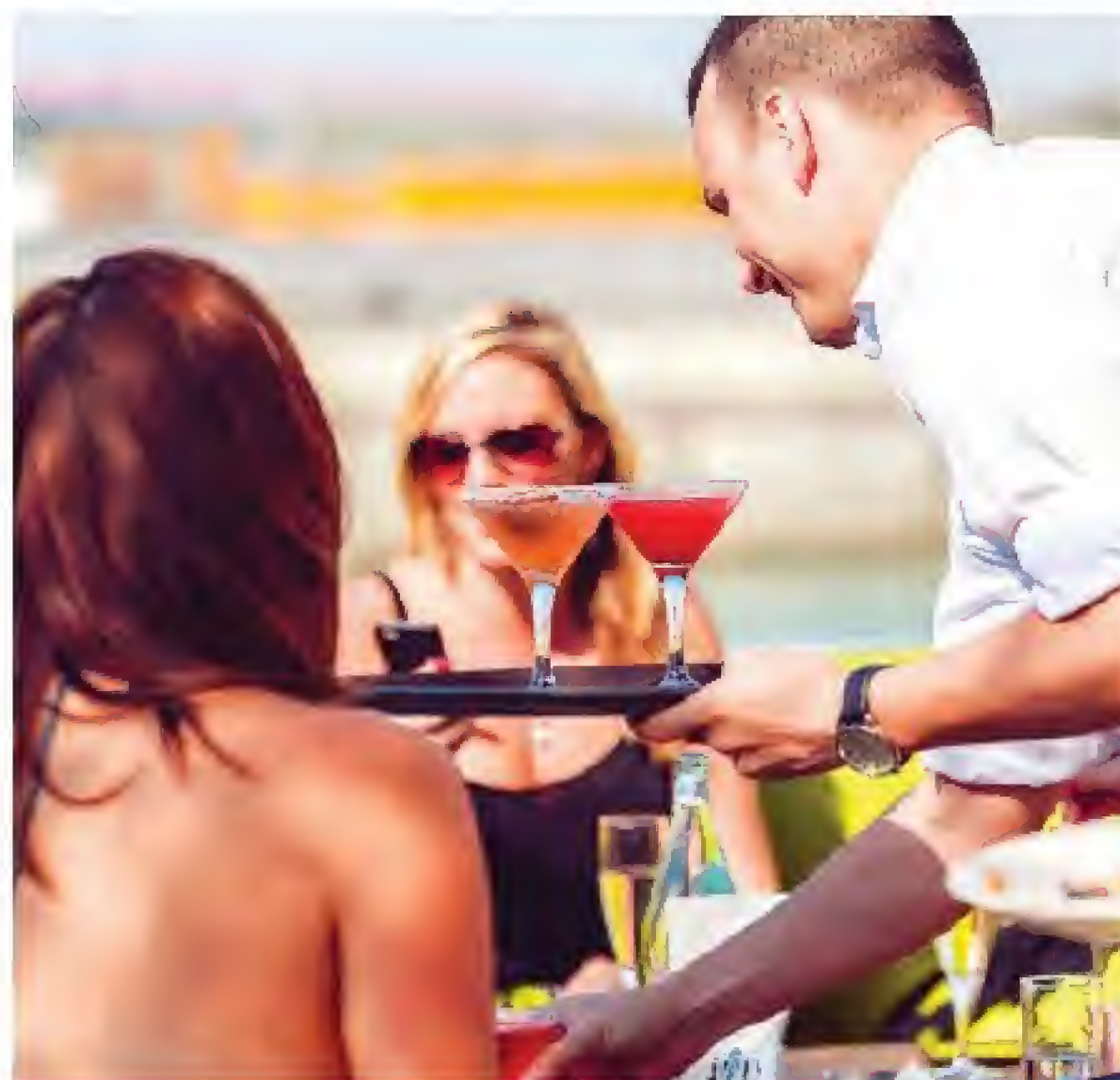
Wet and Wild

By popular demand, Yas WaterWorld Abu Dhabi's Ladies Night has been brought back for a pearl-themed weekly women-only evening of splashing fun for girls of all ages. The park is lit up and glowing as the girls get the run of the place, and the Amwaj Wave Pool is filled with illuminated coloured pearls - plus plenty of live music is on offer for ladies to dance the whole night away.



Family Fun

Iris Yas Island is taking over Saturdays, with its new weekly family offering. The glamorous restaurant has debuted a new kids menu and playground, so parents can grab coffee or a breakfast while the youngsters run wild. The highlight of the new breakfast menu is undoubtedly the "Eggs Royal" which comes complete with rich and delicious truffles – definitely a treat for adults.



Easter Treats

April means Easter eggs and plenty of fun

Celebrate spring and all things cute and fluffy at Yas Marina on April 19 between 11am and 5pm. A petting zoo, pony rides, arts and crafts, market stalls and dining options provide something for everyone.

Dine at Cipriani on Thursday April 17 and Friday April 18, and receive a 15% discount off your total bill plus one free beverage each. Guests can also enjoy a delicious Italian Easter feast on April 20. Book before the April 15 and enjoy 15% off. *Join Yas Island Rotana on April 12.*

Offers

You can get out and about on Yas Island with one of these great hotel offers. Book by calling dnata on +971 4 316 6666 or by visiting dnatatravel.com

Radisson Blu Hotel, Abu Dhabi Yas Island

1 night from USD130 per person.

Special offers: Complimentary upgrade to Superior Room and unlimited access to one of the Yas Parks

Includes: Stay in a Standard Room with breakfast daily.

Validity: Now 'til April 30, 2015

Crowne Plaza Abu Dhabi Yas Island

1 night from USD 122 per person.

Includes: Stay in a Superior Room with breakfast daily and 2 Yas park tickets

Validity: Now 'til April 30, 2015.

Yas Viceroy Abu Dhabi

1 night from USD115 per person.

Special offers: Receive 20% discount on Food & Beverage and Guaranteed Check out at 2pm

Includes: Stay in a Marina King Room with breakfast. *Validity:* Now 'til April 30, 2015.

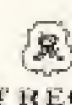
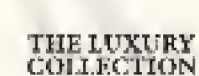
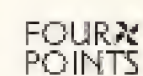
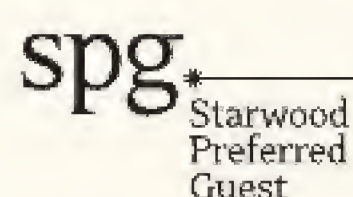
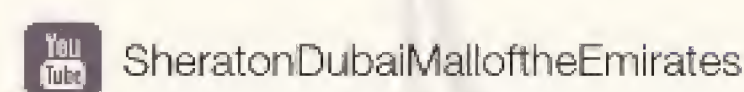
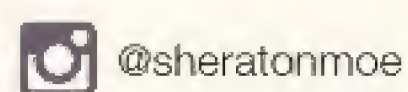
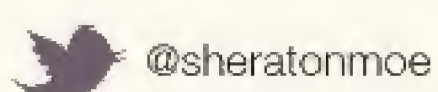
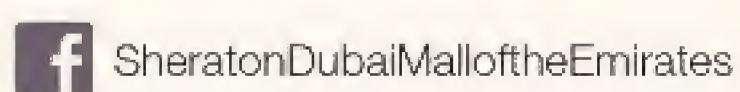


Channel your inner golfer

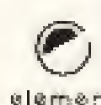
Enjoy a relaxing stay at Sheraton Dubai Mall of the Emirates Hotel and play at the prestigious Els Club. Take advantage of our exclusive partnership to avail a round of golf on the Troon Golf managed, Ernie Els designed course, equipment hire and a host of stay benefits including breakfast and access to Sheraton Fitness.

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sheratondubaimalloftheemirates.com/golf



ST REGIS



element

Adventure Special

*Ready for something
out of the ordinary?*

-
- 38 Lapland in the summertime
 - 44 Go Extreme in New Zealand
 - 50 Take a hike in Nepal





There Is *A Light* That *Never* Goes Out

Think Lapland is just reindeer, snow and Santa Claus? So did Richard Jenkins, until a week under 24-hour summer sunlight changed his mind





When you think of Lapland, what usually comes to mind is a typical Christmas scene – snow, gambolling reindeer, frosty log cabins and packs of huskies carrying sleds over the frozen ground. For two thirds of the year, that's pretty accurate. But have you ever wondered what happens over summertime in Santa's hometown?

World Traveller was invited to Ivalo in northern Finland to spend a week at the Kakslauttanen Arctic Resort, famous for its glass igloos from which, over the long period of winter (October-April), the Northern Lights can be seen shimmering in all their glory. That sounded great – except our trip was due to take place in August. When you take away the snow and the magic of Christmas, what's left? Plenty, as it turns out. Over the summer months, the sun never goes down in Ivalo – meaning there's 24 hours of light a day and a phenomenon

known as the Midnight Sun. Our group has one week to pray the cloudy weather allows us a glimpse of this celestial light show, and to see what else the Arctic Circle has to offer over the summer months when the snow has melted away, giving way to lush greenery and the scent of fresh pine.

The journey from Dubai to Ivalo is a long one, but at least it's comfortable. Turkish Airlines' business class seats took us from DXB to Helsinki, where our Finnish adventure started. Helsinki is charmingly innocent for a city of its size – in Scandinavia only Copenhagen, Oslo and Stockholm are bigger – and our tour guide cheerfully pointed out high-ranking governmental buildings like the Finnish Houses of Parliament that “you can pretty much walk up to and tap on the windows.” The city's also 80 per cent covered in trees; spruce, pine and silver birch are almost everywhere you look. Rambling

around Helsinki's port, chomping on fried vendace (small sardine-like fish that are fried and then eaten whole), it wasn't long before we reached Sibelius Park. Named for Finland's most famous composer, the park's centrepiece is the Sibelius Monument, a truly impressive 24-tonne work that represents both the organ and the forest in which it sits. It plays its own tune, too – when the wind blows, the hollow stainless-steel pipes hum and low with the breeze, like breathing into a bottleneck.

It was then time to head north and explore the country. Several hours by minibus later, we disembarked at our next stop – Ivalo, northern Finland, home to Kakslauttanen Arctic Resort. Each member of our travelling party was given the keys to their own luxurious lodge, complete with mini-sauna in the bathroom, and given time to scrub up before dinner. We were told we'd be seeing reindeer on this trip, but we



Opening page: The Midnight Sun. Clockwise from top left: Helsinki Cathedral; Sibelius Monument; Reindeer grazing; Freshly picked blueberries.

didn't expect our first encounter to come on a plate. The Sámi people are indigenous to the region of northern Finland, Sweden, Norway and parts of Russia, and reindeer are a huge part of their lives. They herd them, raise them for fur and use them for meat, which was exactly what was waiting for us on our first night – ground Rudolph and mashed potatoes. Some of the group feigned full stomachs, but this intrepid (and hungry) writer was all too happy to take part in local tradition and try a plateful. I'm glad I did, as the meat was tender, flavourful and hearty. Sorry Santa, looks like you'll need to raise a few more of the herd by Christmastime. Bedtime beckoned, only it didn't feel like it, as it was midnight and still light. When you're this close to the Arctic Circle, between May and October there is no night-time. This is why we weren't sleeping in Kakslauttanen's famous glass igloos. Unless we'd brought some pretty thick eye

masks, there'd be no sleep for any of us. And the worst part was, we couldn't even see the famed Midnight Sun – a thick layer of cloud meant that everything was illuminated but it was hard to tell where from. We'd have to hope for a break in the clouds so we can

Over summer, the sun never goes down - meaning there's 24 hours of daylight

see the sun shining through the night, but it wasn't going to happen any time soon.

The next morning (or so the clocks said, it's hard to tell when it doesn't get any darker or lighter), it was time to head even further north, into Norway's mountains and up to the North Cape, often mis-labelled as the northernmost point of Europe,

deep into the Arctic Circle and just 2,000 kilometres from the North Pole (in fact, Knivskjellodden, a rocky outpost slightly further into the sea than the North Cape, holds that title – but it's not big enough for a gift shop). Here the views of the Midnight Sun would be spectacular – were it not for the clouds covering everything, and also keeping up a steady outpouring of sleety drizzle. The bus ride back south to Finland, however, was worth the trip – icy lakes and ponds are dotted around the green mountains, and plenty of herds of reindeer roam, only paying us heed when our tour guide stopped the coach in order to try and make friends – sending them bounding off into the distance.

After another night in the cabins, and another blackout as far as the Midnight Sun was concerned, we were itching to get out and experience some more natural beauty, and that's when the countryside really

Where To Stay *Kakslauttanen Arctic Resort*

Kakslauttanen Arctic Resort is the perfect base from which to craft a summertime Lapland adventure, and its log cabins are beautifully appointed. In Helsinki, the Scandic Continental Hotel oozes cool. To book, visit dnatatravel.com or call +971 4 316 6666.

started to show off its magic. Aside from reindeer, the Finns get a huge amount of mileage – literally – out of another kind of animal: huskies. Kakslauttanen has its own husky farm, which in the winter is used to pull sleds over the snowy tundra, and in the summer to pull modified sleds with wheels over the hilly terrain. There's less work for them to do in the summer, which means they need regular walking, which is where we came in. We were each paired with one of the beautiful dogs, told to hold on tight to the leash, and go. Our walking route was several miles on a hilly peak, with nothing but grass and pine trees for as far as the eye could see. Hanging onto my husky's lead proved to be slightly difficult, as she pulled with the force of a tractor and was clearly keen to be moving a lot faster than I was. To boot, she was one of the "alpha" animals of the pack, instinctively pushing to work harder and faster than her colleagues. Working Siberian huskies can run the equivalent of four marathons in a day, so this brisk trot through the wilderness wasn't going to tire my charge out one bit – they'd go on a proper ramble with their trainers later on. For me, it was a case of getting to know these incredible dogs up close, and find out an interesting fact – huskies' blue eyes come from cross breeding with wolves. Pure huskies have brown eyes, and it's not uncommon to find dogs with one eye of each colour, due to mixed genetics.

Huskies safely stowed back in their kennels, (which we'd sped past on a quad bike tour earlier) I learned something else about Finland – it's literally a goldmine. The Kulta Museo at Tankavaara details the fascinating history of gold in the region and the rush that started in the 1960s, when anybody with a pan and a hot tip could find the nearest stream and start searching for the precious metal. I even tried it out myself, and after half an hour's careful shifting of soil had unearthed a few glinting flakes of gold. You don't need much, either. Just one gram of the stuff (about the size of a

pinhead) can be stretched over a distance of two kilometres, albeit it will be thinner than a spider web by that point and not much good for selling.

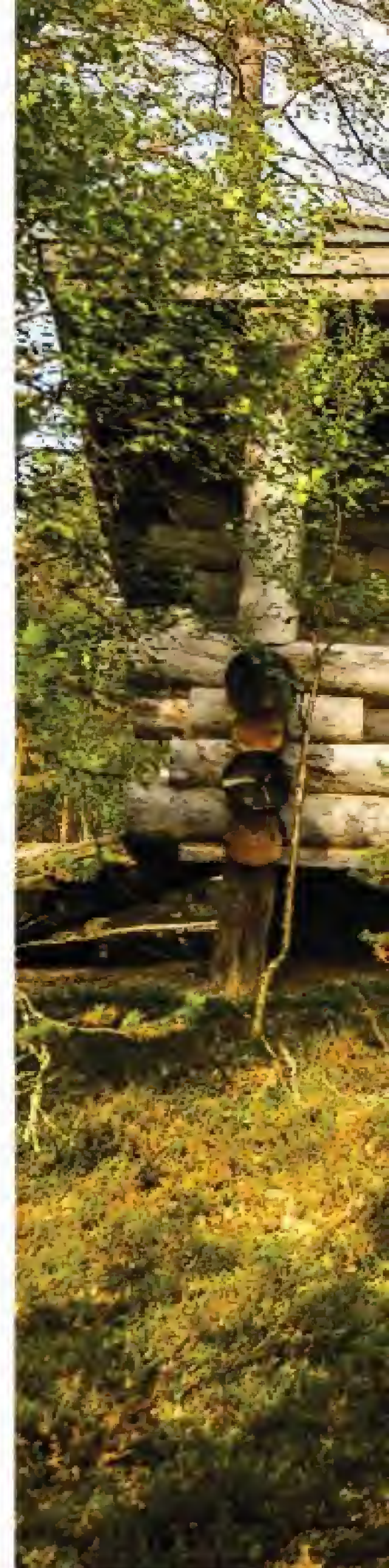
Our final adventure began with a truly spectacular motorboat ride up the Lemmenjoki River. With Sámi men helming our boats, we sped along the glassy river that cuts through the forest wilderness of Lemmenjoki National Park, the biggest in Finland. Our destination was the Ravadas waterfall, a beautiful and glittering cascade just perfect for sitting beside and enjoying

It was the most surreal and beautiful sunset imaginable

some freshly brewed coffee, wild salmon stew and freshly picked blueberries. As a cultural treat, our Sámi guide, Nils-Heikki, performed a traditional joik. These guttural, ululating songs don't use actual words, rather they are vocalisations designed to evoke specific feelings. Joiks can tell the story of a Sámi man's past, the tale of the land, or, in the case of the young man singing for us, the story of a beautiful lady. Also, there was good news: The clouds were lifting, evening was falling and it was time to head off to the highest point we could find to witness the sunset and hopefully catch a glimpse of the Midnight Sun.

The excitement in the group was palpable as we made our way to the top of Kaunispää Fell, and up the wooden tower which gave incredible views of every valley, mountain and pine tree spread out far below us. And then we watched as the flaming red-gold sun descended towards the distant horizon and then, improbably, stopped short. It was the most surreal and beautiful sunset imaginable, a vivid difference from the Northern Lights found here throughout winter but no less memorable. And at least now we know there's no way that Santa could get bored during the summer.

Clockwise from right: A lodge at Kakslauttanen Arctic Resort; ATV safari at Kakslauttanen; Motorboat ride along Lemmenjoki River.





Go *to the* Extreme

*To fully appreciate New Zealand's incredible
beauty, you need to get involved...*





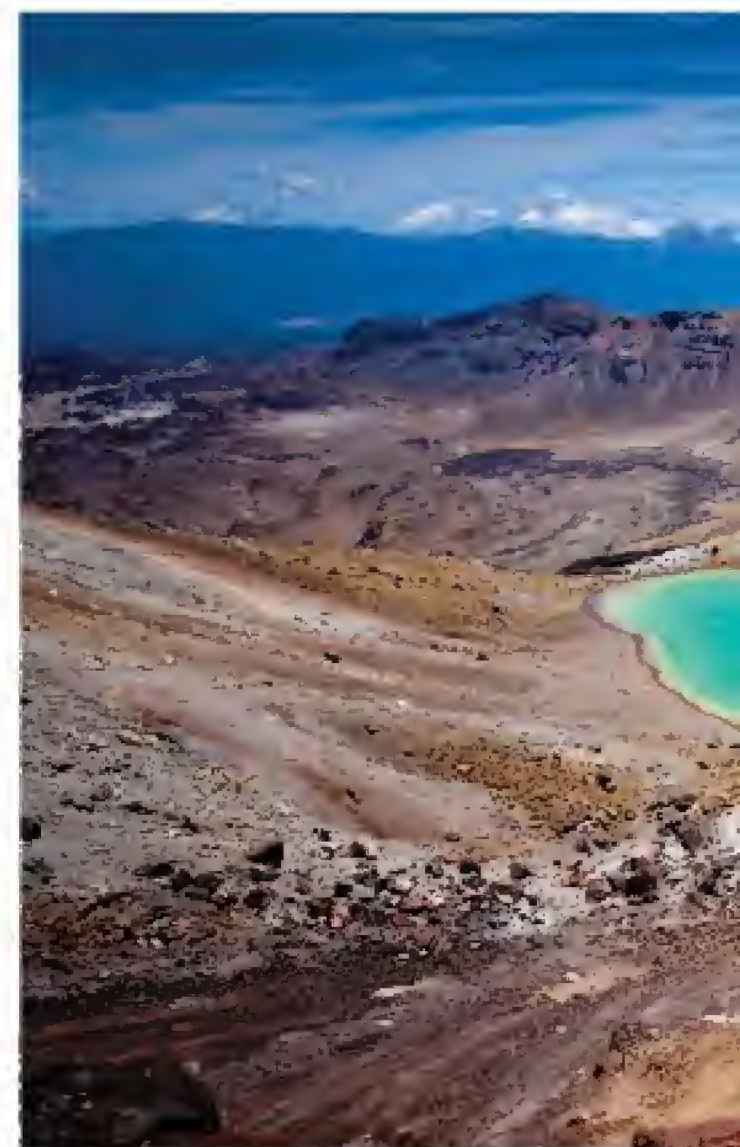
Get the glo(worm) in Waitomo

There's nothing quite as romantic as drifting under the twinkly roof of the Waitomo Glowworm Caves — until you think about what's creating the stardust above you. The glow-worms are actually gnat larvae, and the light they give off is designed to lure prey to a grisly death. But humans are too big to get caught in the spiderweb-like trails they dangle to trap insects, and the gnats don't bite. Besides, the magic is incomparable, when all lights are off and visitors, hushed to silence, are navigated through the caves on a small boat. The 45-minute cruise is relaxed, but there is an adventurous alternative: abseiling 35m into the caves, flying through the darkness on a zip-wire, then leaping into the icy underground river with an inner tube around your bum — ropes affixed along the cave walls allow 'tubers' to pull themselves through. waitomo.com

Float above Canterbury Plains

After helping to assemble the balloon in a farmer's field, you hop into the basket with New Zealand's champion hot air balloon, and ascend smoothly into the sky. The Canterbury Plains are a 300km-wide patchwork of farmland below you. Mount Cook and Kaikoura are, on clear days, on the horizon — and the Pacific Ocean stretches in unyielding tones of blue. Thanks to favourable winds, this is the most reliable place in New Zealand for hot-air ballooning (meaning you're much more likely to make the flight than in Queenstown). The view in winter, of snow-capped mountains and the sun rising over the Pacific, is nothing short of spectacular. ballooningcanterbury.com

Opening page: Waitomo.
This page, clockwise from top left: Hot air ballooning over Canterbury Plains; Pohutu Geyser, Rotorua; Crater lakes, Tongariro Alpine Crossing.





Soar in a Tiger Moth over Wanaka

Sailing through the clouds, your body exposed to the air — it's the closest you'll ever get to flying like a bird. Start in the vintage-styled hangar, complete with '40s tunes in the background setting the mood for your costume change into jumpsuit and Amelia Earhart-esque sheepskin-lined leather jacket (it's a good look and keeps you warm, too). The Tiger Moths ooze the charm of days gone by. Soon after your pilot eases you into lift-off, the peaks of Mount Aspiring and the glimmer of Lake Wanaka appear before you, and — of course — that blue expanse that you can reach out and almost touch. Wind in your hair, Wanaka beneath you, flying becomes a thing of romance. The highlight? The barrel rolls — it's scary for a second, then you feel like you're in *Top Gun*. classicflights.co.nz

Get pampered at Hell's Gate

Rotorua is a town in a crater with a crust so thin that the fiery guts of Earth's molten core burst through with primordial savagery. Forces below the rocky landscape create exploding geysers, sizzling sulphurous waters and bubbling pools of mineral-rich muds. Pohutu, in Te Puia geothermal valley, is the largest geyser in the southern hemisphere, sending a scalding hiss almost hourly onto rock caked with millennia of mineral deposits. At nearby Hell's Gate reserve, spa day-trippers watch steam drift off 1,000-degree Celcius pools prior to a dip in cooler silky mud. After a balmy sulphur bath, you might be a bit whiffy, but your skin will be as soft as a baby's bottom (hellsgate.co.nz). There's a more rustic experience at Waiariki Pools in Ngawha Springs, Northland: hand over \$3 and then ease yourself into the sulphurous waters bubbling in holes in the ground.

Clockwise from right: Inside an ice cave; A Tiger Moth flying over Lake Wanaka; Hot spring near Rotorua.

Trek on Glaciers

Franz Josef Glacier South Island's Southern Alps cradle some of the most remarkable sights in the southern hemisphere, but few beat Franz Josef to the upper reaches of the classic bucket list. The glacier is a stunning ice mass, forming a dynamic duo with the Fox Glacier, and accessible only by helicopter. The journey merely makes a visit to its austere beautiful surface all the more special. You whirr through the air across Mount Cook National Park — tens of thousands of hectares of sprawling wilderness — and land for a tramp over the frozen surface, marvelling at the magic of ice as nature sculpted it (glacierhelicopters.co.nz). Want to boost the exhilaration level even further? Sign up for the Heli Ice Climb, and test your nerves as you ice-pick along frozen aquamarine chasms (franzjosefglacier.com) — or soothe post-hike limbs with a steamy soak in the glacier hot pools (glacierhotpools.co.nz).





Hike the picture perfect volcano

Rust-coloured hot-water streams flow through the stark lava fields in the North Island's volcanic heart. As the track climbs towards the vast bowl of the South Crater, steamy blasts are a warning that Tongariro is still highly active. The Tongariro Alpine Crossing is the king of extravagantly landscaped day treks, unveiling photogenic otherworldliness with every step. The 19.4km trek ascends steadily over ridges to more than 1,800m above sea level (so you'll get a good workout). To the right looms Ngauruhoe, which doubled as Mount Doom in *The Lord of the Rings* — from the scarlet Red Crater peak, stained with minerals, you pick your way carefully back down past the Emerald Lakes, the route lined with billowing fumaroles and the belching Te Mari craters. Use the shuttle service to get back to the Mangatepopo car park starting point. tongarirocrossing.com

Sail across a hissing crater

Way out to sea, 50km off the east coast of the Bay of Plenty, an ancient marine volcano dozes — a jagged-edged, rocky doughnut in luminous waters of blue and green. Neither dormant nor fully active, it is unique in the world, proof of the dynamic nature of New Zealand's landscape and a testament to the fact that the country is still a work in progress — in the case of White Island, it's being thrust up from below the seabed. No people (and scarcely any plants) can live here — as suggested by the ageing ruins of a sulphur-mining factory, destroyed by a blast in 1914. But it's possible to spend a day walking across the almost lunar landscape of gurgling mud pools, rushing vents and eerie sulphur crystals. Scramble through the crater, listening for the hiss of the fumaroles as they release steam, and watch for colonies of snowy gannets, the only residents hardy enough to stay permanently.



On A Walk Through The *Wilderness*

*If you want to avoid crowds of trekkers,
then the Upper Dolpo region of Nepal is
the place for you. Jeremy Laurance hits
the hiking heights*



After years walking in the mountains, one ambition still gnawed at me. To go into the wilderness – higher, further, deeper – than I had gone before. Doesn't every trekker share that craving? Most of my walking has been done in Europe: in the Pyrenees, Alps, and Dolomites, all wonderful mountain ranges. But if I have a complaint it is that too often I have found myself gazing down from some pristine peak on to a busy road or bustling town, bringing unwanted reminders of the clattering world.

It was because of this that I went on my first trek in the Himalayas, to the Langtang valley. But though the snowy peaks were spectacular, there were still too many other trekkers on the route for my taste. So for this, my second visit, I chose a trip to a little visited area: the Upper Dolpo, north west of the Nepalese capital, Kathmandu. The journey involved 21 days on trek under canvas in one of the highest inhabited parts of the world. It's a region with no roads, no tourist teahouses, no vehicles and no mobile phone cover. Nothing to do, in fact, except walk, eat, sleep, and gaze.

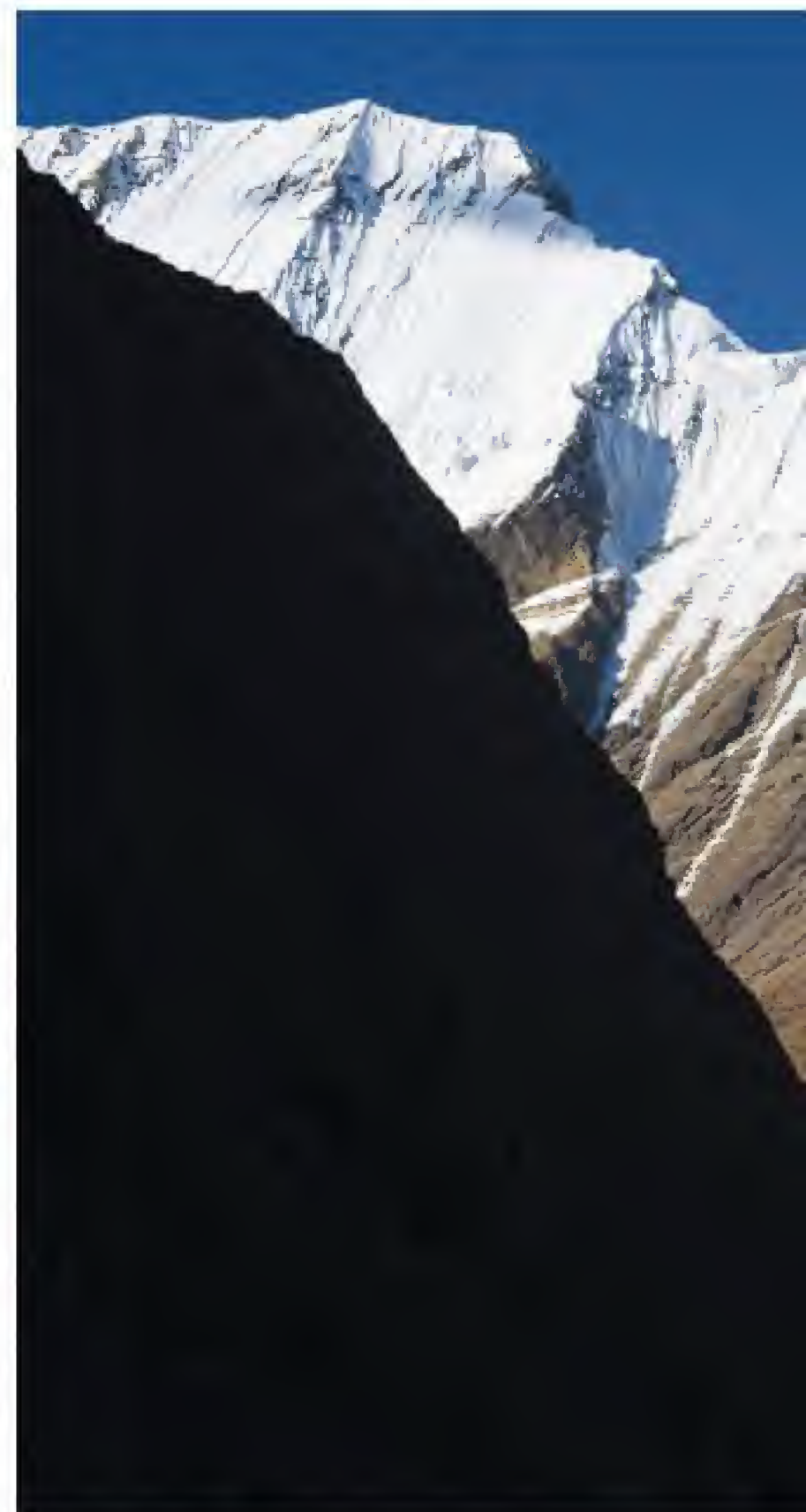
Nine of us assembled at Heathrow. Among the others were an IT specialist, an engineer, a couple of retired teachers, a civil servant and an environmental consultant. All were more experienced trekkers than me, but we shared a common purpose: we were ordinary people looking for an out-of-the-ordinary experience.

We were ordinary people looking for an out-of-the-ordinary experience

Our starting point was Juphal, a village in the mountains north west of Kathmandu reached by two short flights, the last in a little propellor-driven aircraft which climbed for an hour over the forested foothills before skimming a pass with less than 30 metres to spare and dropping into a glaciated bowl. Through the cockpit we glimpsed the airstrip – a narrow mountainside ledge, sloping steeply up. Seconds later, with white knuckles, we were down.

We were lucky. Not lucky in landing safely, but in landing at all. Planes can only reach this place – eight days' walk from the nearest road – in fine weather. Wind and cloud frequently close the airstrip and the first news we received on our arrival was gloomy; our head Sherpa guide and all our gear had been delayed until the next day... possibly.

Juphal, at 2,400m, was a scrappy village with noisy dogs and muddy paths winding between the houses. Chickens pecked and goats roamed as we pitched camp on a spectacular hanging terrace in front of a hotel. Happily, we didn't have





Opening page: A yak.
Clockwise from top left:
A young Nepalese girl; The
snow covered peaks of
Lhashama in Dolpo; Trekkers
crossing Phoksundo lake;
Hikers on a wooden bridge in
Dolpo; A trekker stands above
Phoksundo lake. Next page:
A campsite in Dolpo.

long to contemplate the soaring hillside opposite, terraced to the highest level, with deep clefts and paths zig-zagging up. By next morning, guide Chet and our gear had arrived and at noon we were off, heading steeply down in hot sunshine, then tramping by the roaring river between the folded hills, past olive and walnut trees, little plots of maize, spinach and buckwheat, the scent of wild marijuana, which grows everywhere, in our nostrils.

We were travelling in some style: there were 16 mules to carry our tents, sleeping bags, food and cooking gear, five kitchen staff, four porters, three sherpas and two muleteers in our retinue.

The days settled rapidly into a pattern – “bed tea” at 6.30am followed by a bowl of hot washing water. Breakfast of porridge, omelette, chapatis and jam, tea and coffee and cocoa. After breakfast, having packed up our things, we would take our daypacks and set off. The laden mules would follow. The kitchen staff would wash up, pack their huge loads, set off and overtake us, and, astonishingly, have the kitchen set up again and lunch cooking before we arrived at the designated spot.

For the first three days we climbed steadily by the foaming river, crossing and re-crossing it, camping beside it so you had to shout to make yourself heard over the roar. We passed small settlements, where children would call to us and pose for pictures in return for a balloon, the

photographer’s currency (better than sweets).

This region lies in the rain shadow of the main Himalayan peaks. Such rain as we saw fell mainly at night, and on only one day out of 21 did we briefly need to don our waterproofs. We were following the route made famous by Peter Matthiessen in *The Snow Leopard*, the account of his seven-month journey in 1973 in pursuit of the fabled cat. (His descriptions of the region and its tough but charming people are magical.)

Each day, we completed an epic walk – at least that is how I would have described it had we been in Europe. But one becomes blasé about towering mountains, wild valleys and breathtaking views. By day four, the landscape opened out into low scrub backed by sandstone cliffs. As the path corkscrewed up the hill, we were like a column of 90-year-olds, breathing heavily in thinning air. Up and up we went to a ridge overlooking Nepal’s highest waterfall (a 300m drop) and we made our way to Phoksundo lake, an intense, vibrant, turquoise-blue expanse.

We had a day’s rest at the lake to acclimatise at 3,600m and to explore the 500-year-old monastery and nearby village of Ringmo, its relative prosperity signalled by some two-storey houses and fields of wheat. The next morning we set out for what was, by common consent, the most spectacular balcony walk any of us had ever

Where To Stay *Kathmandu*

Before your trek, spend a few days exploring the nation's fascinating capital. Shangri-La Hotel Kathmandu has 100 superbly appointed rooms spread over three floors in the quiet diplomatic enclave. Hyatt Regency Kathmandu features traditional Newari style architecture, with rooms overlooking either the World Heritage-listed Boudhanath Stupa or the lush gardens and surrounding mountain ranges. For more information visit dnatatravel.com or call +971 4 316 6666.





encountered, regardless of where we had traveled before.

We were woken at 6am, the sun glinting on the snow peak behind our camp, the sky as intensely blue as the lake. At breakfast, I tried to warm my freezing fingers against a mug of scalding tea. The sun hit us just as we were about to step on to the wooden causeway that skirts the cliff on the west side, suspended on wooden pegs 60m above the water. The path was too narrow for laden donkeys so the porters had to ferry the luggage in three trips. This was not a path where you'd want to meet a donkey, or worse a yak, coming the other way – as depicted in the film *do*, which was shot here (in which a yak train plunged into the abyss).

From the lake we followed a long desolate valley, climbing for two days. As we made camp among trees, a yak train appeared heading between the tents until two of the animals, startled by an over-enthusiastic photographer, demolished the toilet tent. Fortunately no one was inside.

Our camp the next night was one of the most spectacular of the trip – at the foot of a perfectly conical mountain, slick grey rounded hills stretching treeless to the north and the valley dropping away below. It was below freezing at night and turning over in my sleeping bag, I found myself gasping. The smallest effort resulted in heavy breathing. But none of us suffered altitude sickness, thanks to careful pacing.

After crossing the Kang La pass – 5,300m, with a stupendous view of desert hills receding into Tibet – we arrived at Shey Gumpa (the Crystal Monastery), a place of pilgrimage for Buddhists for 1,000 years. The gompa (temple) is set on a high bank above the broad river plain, where yak trains pass on to Tibet. To my eye, the two-storey building, covered in traditional red wash, looked like a suburban semi, but the interior paintings – this is the region where

We had a magnificent view of the 8,000m massif

the pre-Buddhist Bon religion is practised – were impressive.

Later in the trip, as we descended from the Jeng La pass, ice crystals sparkling on the moss covered stones, we had a magnificent view of the 8,000m Dhaulagiri massif gleaming pure white in the morning light, down to the Tarap valley, a sweeping vista of plains and pasture. It was harvest day and the entire village of Tokyu Gaon was in the fields gathering barley, moving across the landscape with huge loads on mules and on their own backs, a scene unchanged for a thousand years.

And beyond, as always, were those magnificent mountains. I'd found the wilderness in the Upper Dolpo, and it was not wanting.

Jaw-dropping villas

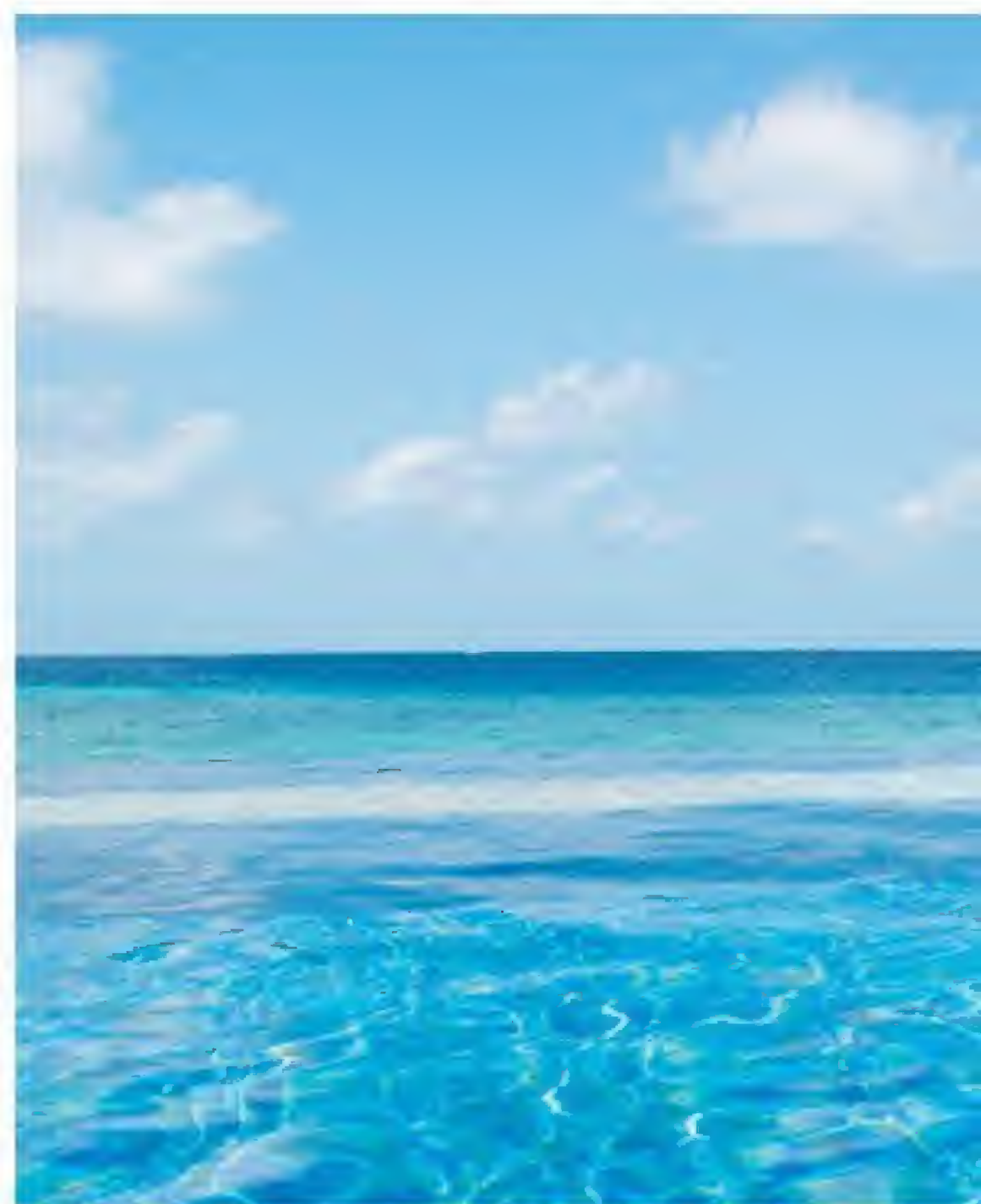
Overwater villas so achingly beautiful they take your breath away is what the Maldives does best. These lovely lodgings at Lily Beach Resort & Spa in the Ari Atoll feature a glass floor for spying the marine life below; private balcony for sunbathing and snoozing; and, of course, magical views of the endless blue horizon.



Iconic Maldives

White sands, crystal-clear waters and blue skies.
Welcome to the world's most perfect archipelago





Watersports Galore

Windsurfing, sailing, kneeboarding, wakeboarding, kitesurfing, waterskiing, parasailing, surfing, stand up paddleboarding, banana boating, jet skiing, seabobbing in an underwater scooter - you name it, you can do it at one

of the archipelago's fabulous resorts (the only trouble you'll have is trying to squeeze them all in). Even kayaking gets an upgrade, with glass-bottomed models like this one at The Sun Siyam Iru Fushi resort in the Noonu Atoll providing an awe-inspiring view of the underwater world below.



Romantic Dining

The Maldives is arguably the most romantic spot on earth, with luxury resorts offering all manner of private dining experiences. We love the Moon Deck at Vivanta by Taj, a secluded outpost with just one table that comes with bespoke menus, discreet service and a serenading band, no less.



Wonderful wildlife

Offering some of the best diving and snorkelling on the planet, tropical fish, turtles, whale sharks and manta rays are just some of the marine life you'll see at this Indian Ocean paradise. Dolphin-watching cruises are hugely popular too, like this one at Four Seasons Four Seasons Resort Maldives at Kuda Huraa.



Sublime Spas

Prefer to flop and drop and let the experts soothe away your stress? You've come to the right place, as the Maldives offers unrivalled luxury when it comes to pampering. Take your pick from al-fresco treatments on the sand, overwater treatment rooms where you can gaze at the

ocean to your heart's content, or in-villa pampering for those seeking privacy. You'll find one of our favourite spas at Coco Bodu Hithi in the Kaafu Atoll, which offers hydrating facials, restorative massage rituals and beautifying body therapies tailored to your needs.



A tropical beach scene with palm trees and a thatched-roof building. The sun is low in the sky, casting long, warm shadows across the golden sand. A small wave is visible on the left side of the frame.

Out with the Old

"The new luxury" was the travel buzz-phrase of 2014. Mark Jones visited Trancoso to find out exactly what it looks like in Brazil

Let me give you a contender for the most overused phrase in the travel/lifestyle business in 2014: “the new luxury”. It was on the lips of every hotelier, trend predictor, brand guardian and lifestyle guru. These people all love a fresh narrative from time to time. But the main reason “new luxury” came into being is because old luxury is in trouble.

The share prices of some luxury companies fell by up to a quarter last year. The most conspicuous consumers of recent times, Russians and Chinese, have been spending a lot less and rather less conspicuously (for different reasons: sanctions, oil prices and a currency meltdown in Russia; a new leader and a newly austere climate in China). The Japanese government choked extravagant spending with a new sales tax. In the west, a new Pope-of-the-people exchanged his palace for a guesthouse. Meanwhile, the new oligarchs of American technology prefer hoodies to silk suits and backpacks to monogrammed luggage.

This is how James Thompson, the man in charge of Diageo’s priciest drinks brands, described trends in luxury in a recent interview: “Away from show for its own

The main reason “new luxury” came into being is because old luxury is in trouble

sake towards knowledge, appreciation, craft and heritage – something with a story.”

All of which takes us to a small village set around a square of grass and sand in north-east Brazil – a place with quite a story. I’m speaking to Wilbert Das. We are in his favourite place: his open-air workshop down a side street where a team of local and foreign craftsmen are working on furniture and art works. In his ragged, faded T-shirt, Das does not look like the owner of the most chic hotel in town, though he is. He certainly does not look like the former creative director of a giant European fashion brand – he is that too.

“The rich person who needs reminding of their status has gone,” says Das. “They don’t need liveried staff. They might have a hundred million in the bank. They don’t need reminding. They want stuff they don’t see every day.”

So, welcome to new luxury central: the Uxua Casa Hotel & Spa, Trancoso. Das was a step or two away from burn-out when he took a break here from his job as creative director of Diesel. He came back again and again. Then he decided to jack in the job and move here permanently. He took over an old hippie hotel and set to work, room by room, stone by stone, building the kind of hotel that people don’t see every day.

What is it about Trancoso? Before meeting Wilbert, I set out to explore. A white mule





Opening page: Caraiva Beach, south of Trancoso. This page, clockwise from left: A friendly face at Uxua Casa; The spa at Uxua Casa; Bahian cuisine.



Clockwise from above: Barra Beach in Trancoso; Fresh tropical fruits at Uxua Casa; One of the hotel's beachside casas; A communal area at Casa Uxua.

picked at the close-cropped grass in front of the whitewashed 16th-century Jesuit chapel on a long rectangle of common land. Its flanks are lined with multi-coloured houses. A grandmother in a pink vest sang to a baby while song thrushes trilled away in the cacao trees. Someone was touching up the tangerine-coloured walls of a shop, while the owner of the pistachio one next door wondered if she should do the same.

Trancoso is more than 1,000km north of – and, on the face of it, about 40 years behind – Rio de Janeiro. Not much for the international luxe set, you'd think, unless they happen to have a passion for early South American colonial architecture and traditional Bahian cuisine.

But look a little closer. That pistachio-coloured building houses a boutique whose only other outlet is in the smartest quarter of Sao Paulo. The tangerine shack sells – and shifts – hardwood coffee tables at the equivalent of £500 a pop. A celebrated TV chef has a pousada here, and the owner of the L'Occitane toiletries empire, Olivier Baussan, owns a villa in the hills (he's also building an amphitheatre to host classical concerts).

There are plenty of other wealthy individuals wandering around inside and outside the hotel. But unlike other luxury resorts, here the celebrities and tycoons get to mix with ordinary people. Everyone wears the same Havaianas.

We had best explain how this came about. Trancoso, formerly known as Sao Joao Baptista dos Indios, was hacked out of the

bush by Jesuits soon after the Portuguese arrived further down the coast in Porto Seguro. The town did exactly what it said on the map: it converted (baptisa) Indians. But in the 18th century, the Jesuits fell out with their bosses, decamped, and for a couple of hundred years the mate trees, unattended, grew thick and luxuriant over the neat little Quadrado they had constructed.

In the 1970s a new bunch of settlers arrived: hippies, or bibilanderos, as they came to be known. Some were fleeing traumatic experiences at the hands of the military dictatorship – one bibilandera I met had occupied a neighbouring cell to a certain Dilma Rousseff, now President of

Here the celebrities and tycoons get to mix with ordinary people

Brazil – others were just looking for what hippies always looked for: empty beaches, cheap houses and a place of agrarian innocence where they could grow beards, wear beads and forget the material world.

But that's the funny thing about hippie hangouts. From Goa to Marrakech and Bali, the mercantile spirit will always out, and the material world will in.

In Trancoso, the guesthouses and bars started to appear, then the craft shops and boutiques. The word got out too. By the late 1980s, Brazil's mini-economic miracle unfolded, and the new rich of Sao Paulo began to make its way up here.





Where To Stay

Uxua Casa Hotel & Spa

In prime position on the town's historic square, Uxua Casa Hotel & Spa has ten private beachside casas, an open kitchen serving Bahian cuisine, a picturesque beach bar and spa with Bahia's first Vichy treatment suite. For more information visit dnatatravel.com or call +971 4 316 6666.



Despite seeing Beyoncé kicking a football on the Quadrado and Mario Testino doing a Vogue shoot there, a hotel of Uxua's quality was not inevitable. It needed the authorities to build a proper road from Porto Seguro, 50km away. And most of all, it required the original inhabitants and the hippie incomers to band together in a conservation effort that put off the developers and town planners who saw gold in those humble Jesuit shacks. They banned traffic from the Quadrado and they banned new building projects.

They're also proud they've kept the major hotel groups from getting a foothold here, though there is a Club Med a couple of kilometres out of town, by the golf course. With its Europop, huge pool and neat lawns, it feels like a different world.

Trancoso is the best of Brazil in a nutshell. The beach – a steep 15-minute walk from the village on a muddy track through steaming mangroves – is a proper Atlantic affair: steeply banked rough sand, crashing waves and silky inlets punctuated by teeming beach bars which function as a second home for the locals.

The Jesuit heritage co-exists with the scrub, the bars and the native stalls. The tanned faces of Sao Paulo, Amsterdam and London mingle with the thousand variations on pardo (mixed-race), black and Amerindian. And maybe this is what the new luxury means: a place where everyone who lives there and everyone who visits feels comfortable in their own skin. That's not something you can easily put a price on.



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68 Diving in the Maldives and quirky hotel transfers **70** Six of the Best infinity pools **78** Cultural Abu Dhabi **80** A super San Francisco Suite



Under the sea dining experiences

Ossiano, Atlantis, The Palm, Dubai

With floor-to-ceiling windows alongside the vast aquarium, you'll feel like you're dining underwater. Plump for the nine-course degustation menu, which features sublime dishes such as octopus carpaccio and lobster veloute. atlantisthepalm.com

Fish & Chip Shop, Amilla Fushi, The Maldives

Dubbed the 'world's most exotic chippie', this new beachside restaurant from top Aussie chef Luke Mangan serves favourites such as battered or crumbed cod, haddock and scampi, as well as the local fishermen's catch of the day. amilla.mv

Finz, Beach Rotana, Abu Dhabi

Overlooking the sea at the end of the jetty, this award-winning spot has seafood cooked in variety of styles, from wok and tandoori to Cataplana-style in a copper pan. Meanwhile, the Seafoodlicious buffet at Essence offers fantastic value, every Thursday from 7pm. rotana.com

The Rock Restaurant, Zanzibar

Literally perched on a rock in the aquamarine waters off Michanwi Pingwe beach, this spectacular spot (below) has just 12 tables. Expect super fresh seafood, such as lobster, squid and prawns, plucked from the ocean hours earlier.

Travel in Style

*These hotels have
quirky ways of getting
you to and from the
front door.*



Anantara The Palm, Dubai

Those that think they have seen it all in Dubai have never seen it from the city's first ever Thai long-tail boat, now providing trips from Anantara's Palm Jumeirah resort to Dubai Marina and back. It's yet another Thai touch from the luxury hotel chain in Dubai.

Burmese Bus, Myanmar

Buses in Burma in the 1940s were ornately decorated with wooden embellishments, as a celebration of post-colonialism. The buses have slowly been filtered out of regular use, but can still be hired to transport you from the airport to your hotel in a vintage style.

Ziggy Bay, Oman

Not keen on land or sea to make your entrance? It's possible, at Six Senses at Ziggy Bay, to come in from the sky on a paraglider. James Bond couldn't enter a hotel in a cooler manner (not that the spy would want to – it's a surefire way of drawing attention to oneself.)



Dive! Dive! Dive!

Maldives

Returning for the third year, the boutique Maldivian resort of Angsana Ihuru will host its exciting '10 to 10 Rannamaari Wreck' diving event on April 25 2015. Streamed via live webcast over 24 hours, scuba divers and snorkelers are invited to take part by exploring the resort's Rannamaari shipwreck. Divers of all levels are free to take part in the underwater excursion, but if you'd rather watch from dry land WT recommends grabbing a drink at the Velaavani Bar and enjoying the show with your feet up. angsana.com



Surf's Up!

Africa becomes the surf capital of 2015

East Africa's reputation for catching waves has been growing steadily, and 2015 is the year it officially becomes the new big thing in terms of surfing. Madagascar, Mozambique and Zanzibar are all opening luxurious surf schools where beginners can learn the basics in the tropical Indian Ocean, which has swells that are gentle to newcomers yet challenging enough to be enjoyed by old pros. According to Surfer Today, the number of the global surfing community is set to swell from 35 million today to 50 million by 2020 – so grab a board and get ahead of the pack.

WIN!

The St. Regis Doha

Win a night's stay plus breakfast at this stunning hotel in the heart of Doha's West Bay, adjacent to Pearl Island. Dine at Hakkasan or Gordon Ramsay, and unwind in the world-class luxury Remede Spa. To be in with a chance of winning, answer this question:

On which bay is the St. Regis Doha to be found?

- A) West Bay
- B) East Bay
- C) South Bay

Email your answer to easywin@hotmediapublishing.com by April 31, 2015. Terms and conditions apply to the prize.



SIX OF THE BEST INFINITY POOLS

It's to infinity and beyond at these ultra-relaxing
dive-in destinations



1.
Burj Al Arab, Dubai
The infinity pool located in the Assawan Spa and Health Club on the 18th floor of Dubai's iconic landmark hotel, and offers fantastic views of the Arabian gulf and the city skyline. The opulent hotel actually features two infinity pools – one that's unisex, and one which is just for ladies. The views are equally spectacular from both, but you'll need to be a hotel guest to enjoy them.
jumeirah.com

2. **Grace Santorini, Greece**

This vacation hotspot is a celebrity favourite - George Clooney is a regular - and the Grace Hotel is one of the most exclusive places to stay. The Villa is a 400-square-metre double suite offering the highest level of luxury and views of the Aegean Sea and Santorini's famous Caldera from the incredibly tranquil infinity pool.
gracehotels.com



2.

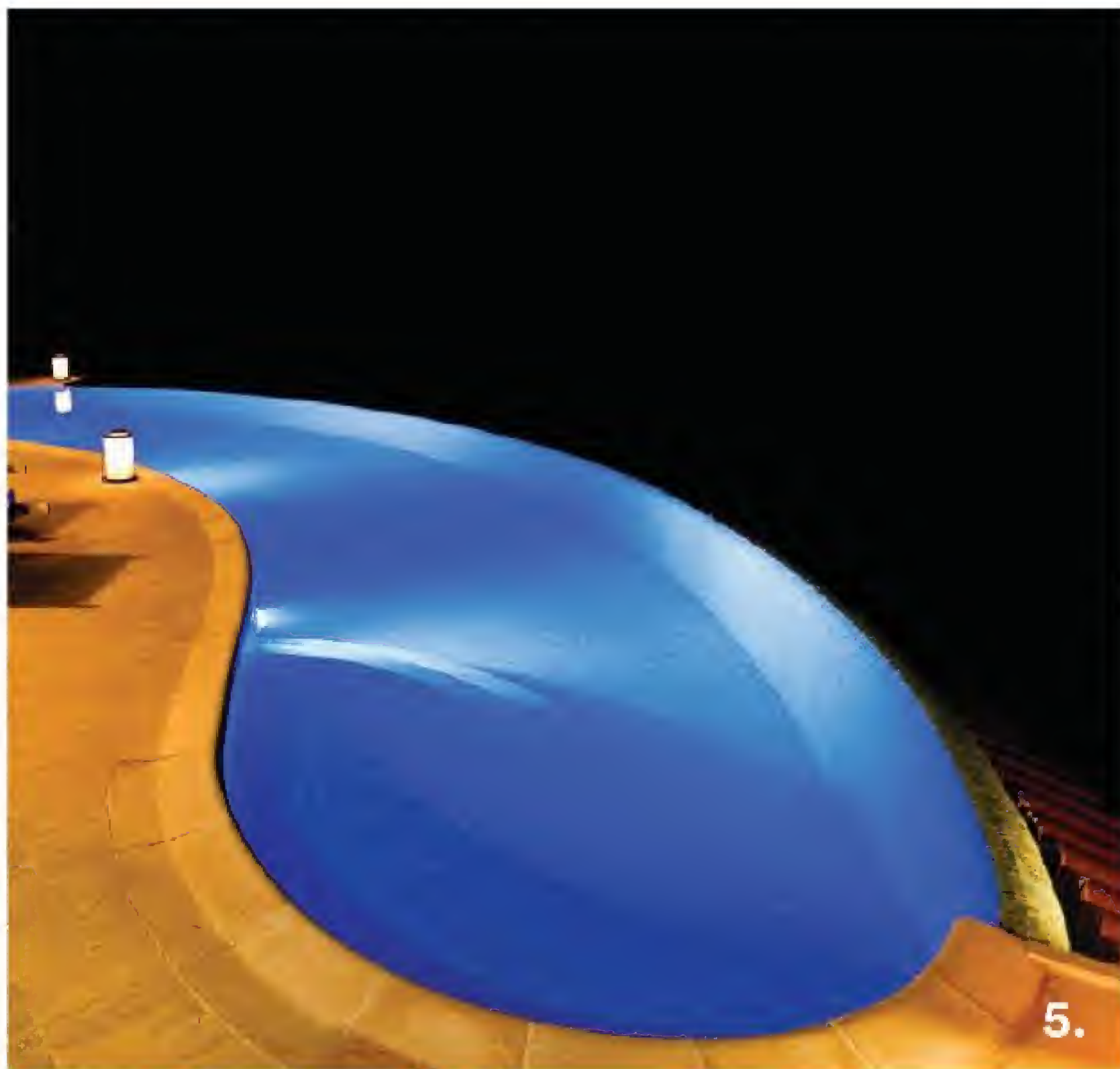
3.

One & Only Reethi Rah, Maldives

The Maldives is well known for its luxurious resorts, and One & Only brings there personally high standards of service to the beautiful region. The hotel's infinity pool looks out onto the glorious Indian Ocean, in

new and spectacular style. The best part is you won't have to share the view with anyone else, as rooms with private pools are available for those seeking seclusion. *reethirah.oneandonlyresorts.com*





4.

Banyan Tree, Seychelles

The best thing about the Seychelles is enjoying the wildness of nature in a comfortable and luxurious way – summed up perfectly by gazing over the tropical forest from Banyan Tree's decadent pool (top left). The shore and the jungle curves irresistibly away into the distance, tempting guests to get out there and explore... maybe after just one more hour of lazing in the sunshine. banyantree.com



6.

5. Villa Mahal, Turkey

Villa Mahal claims to be the most romantic hotel in Europe, and the views from this incredible pool (left) back them up. A sophisticated boutique hotel nestling on a hillside in Kalkan Bay, the site was hand-picked by the owner when she first moved to Kalkan over 25 years ago. There are only 13 rooms, and the open-plan duplex Pool Room opens right out onto this gorgeous pool. villamahal.com

6. Sarara Camp, Kenya

There are no shortage of luxury camps in Kenya, but Sarara is more exclusive than most and contains just six luxe tents, meaning there's very little between the guests and nature. Daily game drives are available, but WT recommends taking a dip in the spacious infinity pool (above) and letting the wildlife – including impala, buffalo and elephants – come to you, as they enjoy the waterhole below. sararacamp.com



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Gulf Air





City Of Culture

April sees Abu Dhabi maintain its position as the cultural hub of the UAE

The UAE's capital is one of the most exciting places in the world to be an artist right now. Whether your creativity is in the field of art, music or theatre, Abu Dhabi has a wealth of events taking place in April to entertain.

There's still time to enjoy the Abu Dhabi Festival, with the wonderful View From Inside exhibition of contemporary Arab art on show until the end of the month at Emirates Palace Gallery.

The Abu Dhabi Classics series has been running since October 2014, and its schedule is drawing to a close. A stunning evening of Italian opera to rival that found

at Rome's La Scala will be conducted by Giuseppe Finzi on April 28 and 29, as well as the artists in residence programme. The season finale will take place in May, during which the newly created TCA Abu Dhabi Classics Music Awards will be presented.

Abu Dhabi's art scene is as contemporary as it is classical, and it's presenting one of the biggest pop stars in the world in April. Robbie Williams is making his debut in the capital with his massive Let Me Entertain You tour, which promises a journey through the former Take That man's extensive catalogue of singalong hits.

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The *Great* Escape

Hatta Fort, Hajar Mountains, UAE

I'm looking to escape the city...

Then Hatta Fort is where you need to go. It's an hour's drive from Dubai, which is long enough to leave the hustle and bustle behind, but still easily close enough for a weekend escape. The resort is up in the majestic Hajar Mountains – a far cry from the skyscrapers and sand found at sea level.

How would you describe the style of the resort?

Think Swiss ski-lodge meets tropical resort. Sounds weird, but it works. There are 51 deluxe

chalet-style rooms, suites and villas, which each feature a private balcony or terrace. The views of the surrounding mountainside are particularly spectacular at sunrise or sunset.

Is there much to do?

Plenty. You can relax and unwind next to the Gazebo Pool or the Rock Pool Waterfall (one of the benefits of staying at a mountaintop retreat) or take part in tennis, mini-golf, archery or a range of themed entertainment options that take place throughout the year. Fitness buffs can hone their

physiques in the fully equipped gym.

What about the dining options?

With breathtaking views of the Hajar Mountains, at Jeema Restaurant guests can indulge in a selection of international delights complemented with a variety of fine beverages and the soulful sounds of Perfect Rhythm, who perform live every evening. For families with youngsters, meals can be enjoyed in the comforts of Al Falaj, the family dining area. jaresortshotels.com

AT A GLANCE

Fast facts about Hatta Fort Hotel

- The best rooms in the house are the two-bedroom deluxe villas, which sprawl over 90 square metres and come with a private garden equipped with a luxurious Jacuzzi.
- Massages and facial treatments are available at Senses Spa.
- For kids, there's an outdoor play area and dedicated children's pool, as well as activities like face painting, bouncy castles and games.

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Validity: Apr 1-Apr 30, 2015

Oman

Salalah Marriott Resort

1 night from USD60 per person

Special offer: 40% room rate reduction plus 25% discount on spa treatments and 2 children under 10 years enjoy all meals for free

Includes: Stay in a Deluxe Room with breakfast daily

Validity: Apr 1-Jun 18, 2015



Conrad Cairo

Qatar

Melia Doha

1 night from USD110 per person

Special offer: 10% room rate reduction, a guaranteed upgrade to the next available room category plus 15% discount on food & beverage and complimentary welcome amenities on arrival

Includes: Stay in a Deluxe Room with breakfast daily

Validity: Apr 1-Jul 1, 2015



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Marriott Resort Salalah

UAE

Fairmont The Palm

1 night from USD255 per person

Special offer: 35% room rate reduction plus receive complimentary upgrade Half Board

Includes: Stay in a Fairmont Room with breakfast daily

Validity: Apr 1-30, 2015

Sheraton Grand Hotel

1 night from USD115 per person

Special offer: 35% room rate reduction*

Includes: Stay in a Deluxe Room with breakfast daily

Validity: Apr 1-May 15, 2015

*Stay must be booked by April 30, 2015

Suite Dreams

What:
Penthouse Suite

Where:
*The Fairmont,
San Francisco*

About:
The hilly streets of San Francisco have been the backdrop to a thousand movies, and you can star in your own with a stay in this luxurious penthouse suite. Perched at the top of famous Nob Hill, the extraordinary suite contains three large bedrooms, four bathrooms, a fully stocked library and even its own billiard room. Venture outside and you'll be treated to panoramic views of San Francisco City and Bay on the spacious terrace. Of course, no visit to San Francisco's Fairmont is complete without a trip to its famous Tonga Room restaurant, a tiki-themed treat that features a floating bandstand. fairmont.com





موسيقى أبوظبي الكلاسيكية
ABU DHABI CLASSICS

ABU DHABI CLASSICS INTERNATIONAL CONCERT SEASON OCTOBER 2014 - MAY 2015

PERFORMANCE CALENDAR

APRIL 28th 2015

Orchestra Accademia Teatro alla Scala with Mikhail Tatarnikov (conductor) and David Fray (piano)

8:00pm

Pre-concert Talk at 6pm

Emirates Palace Auditorium

MAY 12th 2015

TCA Abu Dhabi Classics Music Awards

7:30pm

Emirates Palace Auditorium

MAY 28th 2015

Bertrand Chamayou : Solo Piano Concert, The Wanderer

8:00pm

Al Qattara Arts Centre, Al Ain

APRIL 29th 2015

Orchestra Accademia Teatro alla Scala: Opera Gala

8:00pm

Al Jahili Fort, Al Ain

MAY 27th 2015

Bertrand Chamayou : Solo Piano Concert, Global Encounters

8:00pm

Manarat Al Saadiyat Auditorium

BOOK NOW!

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